ACROSS / A15
Group claims Malampaya fund misused

BUSINESS / B1
Remittances rose 4.9% to $1.32B in Feb.

ACROSS / A15
Mini hydro plants planned in Cordillera

WORLD / A22
N. Korea expels UN nuclear inspectors

ENTERTAINMENT / D1
Angelina Jolie could have come here in disguise

Teodoro supporters turn to the Internet

By Jocelyn R. Uy

DANA PROMOTIONAL activists make up for this presidential aspirant's cautious "silence"?

Supporters of Defense Secretary Gilbert TEODORO A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, April 16, 2009 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 127 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Opposition says Palace out to neutralize Erap

By DJ Yap, Dona Pazzibugan and Christine O. Avendaño

THE UNITED OPPOSITION SAID YESterday the moves to implicate Joseph Estrada in the revival of the criminal case against four World Resources chair Dante Tan showed that the administration "will leave no stone unturned" to scuttle his chances of becoming president again.

San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, a son of Estrada, said the revival of the ISW case OPPOSITION A6

Failon wife fighting for life

BROADCASTER Ted Failon clings tightly to Vice President Noli de Castro inside his home in Tierra Pura, Quezon City, late Wednesday afternoon. The Vice President, a close friend and former ABS-CBN colleague of Failon, came to comfort the top-rating radioman whose wife is at the New Era General Hospital with a gunshot wound in the head. RAFFY LERMA

News anchor faces arrest for evidence tampering

By Nancy C. Carvajal and Artyn dela Cruz
Correspondent

IT WAS A MYSTERY thriller straight out of an ABS-CBN telenovela.

Prominent news anchor and former Congressman Ted Failon yesterday rushed his wife to the New Era General Hospital, where she was fighting for her life with a gunshot wound in the head at press time.

Police were poised to arrest Failon late last night allegedly for tampering with evidence and obstruction of justice, although the circumstances of the shooting of his wife, Trinidad Arevalo Ebong, 45, remained unclear.

Senior Supt. Franklin Moises Mabeong said it had not been established if Failon (born Mario Teodoro Bidon Ebong) was involved but that foul play FAILON A4

FAILON undergoes a paraffin test in his home to check for possible powder burns. He asked not to be brought to the police station. NONOY NAVARRO

THE WEAPON: Walther PPK .380 caliber pistol and firearms license card.

A POLICE investigator looks for evidence in the bathroom of Ted Failon's house Wednesday.

Church not told again on Vatican post

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADERS WERE again caught by surprise by Malacañang's appointment of a new envoy to the Vatican to replace Cristina Ponce Enrile, who quit after only six months at the post.

Msgr. Pedro Quitorio, the spokesperson of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), said he could not yet issue a statement on the appointment of Ma. Mercedes "Mercy" Benavex Arevalo-Tuason as ambassador to the Vatican.

Both Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo and Caloocan Bishop Deogra- CHURCH A4

Senate to probe Villar amid cries of 'political rubout'

By Michael Lim Ubac

DAGGERS ARE OUT AND CHARGES of a "political rubout" are being aired in connection with the ethics complaint against Sen. Manny Villar.

Amid accusations of double standard, the Senate committee on ethics and privileges yesterday ordered Villar to answer charges that his real estate empire had benefited from the alleged P200-million double-funding for the C-5 road extension project.

During a meeting, the committee chaired by Sen. Panfilo Lacson first adopted the order prepared by its legal counsel finding sufficiency in form and substance to the complaint lodged by Sen. Jamby Madrigal, and ordered Villar to respond in five days.

Villar told reporters that the mandated order did not come as a surprise. He said he had long expected such a one-sided decision from his fellow UPDATE A6

Wife's bus ride alarms East Timor leader

By Gabriel Cardinoza and Yolanda Sotelo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—THE PRESident of the National Parliament of East Timor became worried when he found out that his wife, a native of Dagupan, and their 8-year-old son had taken a bus to this city after landing at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia).

Fernando de Araujo arrived here early on Tuesday on a private visit to join his wife, Jacquelline Aquino Siapno, and their son Hadorni for a vacation, and to meet his in-laws. He is staying here for nine days.

"She used to do it," Araujo said of his wife taking the bus.

"And that's my wife's reluctance," he said, adding: WIFE'S A10

EAST TIMOR National Parliament President Fernando de Araujo poses with his son, Hadorni, and wife Jacquelline Aquino Siapno during a courtesy call at the office of Dagupan City Mayor Alipio Fernandez Jr. Wednesday

JDV won't testify at Senate on ZTE

By Michael Lim Ubac

FORMER SPEAKER JOSE DE Venecia Jr. is not about to go to the Senate and reveal other secrets about China's ZTE Corp.-bugging the $329-million contract for the National Broadband Network (NBN) project.

However, De Venecia officially corroborated his son's testimony before a Senate panel that the first family was involved in the NBN-ZTE deal, a claim vehemently denied by the spokespersons of President Macapagal-Arroyo and her husband Jose Miguel Arroyo.

The NBN project sought to link national agencies with local government units through a high-capacity telecommunications network.

Ms Arroyo cancelled the ZTE-NBN contract in October 2007 amid accusations that her husband was involved in the deal that was denounced as overpriced and disadvantageous to JDV A6

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2009

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon and Palawan will experience mostly cloudy skies with rain. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to mostly cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Mostly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Legaspi	Mostly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Puerto Princesa	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Mostly Cloudy
Iloilo	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Cebu	Partly Cloudy	Surigao	Mostly Cloudy
Tacloban	Partly Cloudy	Dipolog	Partly Cloudy
Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy	General Santos	Partly Cloudy

Second FRONTPAGE
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EZ2 (Results as of April 15, 2009)
SUERTRES (Results as of April 15, 2009)
2D: 18 33 23 18
3D: 7 3 1
4D: 5 4 6
FOUR DIGIT: 6 5 0 6
6D: 3 4 7
MEGALOTTO 6/45: 1 16 23 29 39 42
P14,977,332.00

'I'm ready to face charges'

Impeachment case vs Ombudsman gets going at House justice committee

By Ecbert C. Tandoc Jr. and Leila B. Salaverria

GUTIERREZ

THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN yesterday reiterated that it was confident the impeachment complaint against the body's head, Merceditas Gutierrez, would not prosper in the House of Representatives.

"We are quite confident there are congressmen who support the Office of the Ombudsman," Assistant Ombudsman Jose de Jesus said. "Our congressmen are honorable people and they can see what is true and what is false."

Former Justice Secretary Franklin Drilon and leaders of civil society groups accused Gutierrez of betraying all of public trust and culpable violation of the Constitution in an impeachment complaint filed on March 2 for allegedly taking on high-profile cases involving administration allies.

'Baseless charges'

But Gutierrez may not necessarily be assured of the support of administration allies in the House of Representatives, which endorsed the impeachment complaint against her in the earlier congressional session.

Quezon City Rep. Marisa Defensor, justice committee chair, said the investigators may choose not to make their political affiliations a factor when deciding whether the complaint should move forward or not.

"I still believe the truth will rise above party politics," said Gutierrez in a message to lawmen. "I'm ready to face these baseless charges. My private lawyers spent the past two weeks preparing for my defense."

Assistant Ombudsman Mark Jacinto-Henares said that despite the accusation against the agency's highest official, it is "business as usual" in the Office of the Ombudsman. "We are confident that the Ombudsman will be cleared of all these charges," he said.

Defensor said lawmakers could rely on their individual assessment of the complaint, adding that Ombudsman Bhagwagan Aswani had not talked to him or his colleagues about the bid to oust her appointee.

"It's not likely the people will even bother to party lines," he said in an ambush interview yesterday with reporters in Quezon City.

The position of Ombudsman is minor compared to the Office of the President, said Defensor. The lone impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo never even technically reached by her numerous allies in the House.

Crossing party lines

If the complaint prospers and a trial is set, the Senate President would be the presiding officer, instead of the Chief Justice, as is the case when a chief executive is impeached. But congressmen admit.

He also said that if lawmakers believe there are strong facts supporting the allegations against a public official, they should cross party lines to uphold the complaint.

Defensor said he would list the impeachment case as a priority, and would schedule the hearing in two weeks. He also said there is time, theoretically, for the justice committee to rule on the impeachment complaint, and then vote to the Senate.

But first, his committee would have to rule if the complaint is sufficient in form and substance. If it has sufficient substance, Gutierrez would be asked to respond to the allegations in 20 days. The committee would then also have to submit their resolutions.

The House is scheduled to adjourn on June 6.

House majority not solid on Cha-cha, says Defensor

NOT ALL MEMBERS OF THE MAJORITY in the House of Representatives are supporting the move to amend the Constitution now.

Quezon City Rep. Marisa Defensor, a member of the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, said his party mates would be well-advised to stop talking about Charter change because it was only stirring up trouble.

"To put this issue to rest already, better if we don't talk about Cha-cha. It just creates trouble," Defensor told the Arts and Days forum in Quezon City.

He said people are adamant in their belief that amending or revising the Charter is also intended to extend the term of sitting officials or change the form of government.

He said people insist on this even if House leaders have given assurances that the 2010 elections would push through and that no incumbent officials would benefit or have been extended.

Ingrained in people's minds

"To say aside, it has been ingrained in people's minds that once you talk of Cha-cha, you're talking of [lifting] term limits," he said.

According to Defensor, even if the Charter change committee were pushed in the House only aims to amend the economic provisions of the Constitution, people are aware that once a constituent assembly or a convention is convened, any other change can be proposed.

The congressman said he believes many of the House colleagues share his sentiments.

The House resolution seeking to amend the Constitution's economic provisions to lift restrictions on foreign ownership, among others, is authored by Speaker Prospero Nograles and is set to be tackled by the plenary.

Defensor believes that there is much in the 1987 Constitution that has to be changed. He said he appreciates Nograles' efforts to correct the questionable provisions.

But he does not think there is enough time anymore to carry out the constitutional amendments.

He said these changes would be introduced after the 2010 elections, at the start of a new term of office for most elected officials.

Better than JDV's

Camiguin Rep. Pedro Romualdo and Bataan Rep. Mariveles Enriquez said the survey showed that the people only oppose Cha-cha moves, which is not even part of the plan.

Nograles meanwhile said his version of Charter change is better than that of his predecessor Pangasinan Rep. Jose de Venecia.

"JDV would cost equate [Cha-cha] with the Charter that he was initially pushing. He was the one who used to run the Speaker. Our motives there and now are very different. Mine is to make our economic provisions more adaptable in the face of the global crisis, and that's it," said Nograles in a text message.

De Venecia claimed that Nograles' House Bill 7307 seeking to lift foreign equity restrictions was a ploy for the administration's ultimate goal of time extension.

Nograles said De Venecia was the last person he expected to speak ill of Cha-cha.

"JDV has absolutely no right at all to even talk like that because he almost busted the entire House pushing for Cha-cha to happen the former and concurrent parliamentary as he had his own agenda then. He knows deep in his heart what this is all about," said Nograles.

"It is his own ghost that is haunting him. As House Speaker, I've made a commitment and I will not take my hands on this commitment that there will be no term extensions for the President or any elective official whose term will expire in 2010."

Leila B. Salaverria

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File charges vs recruiters of stranded drivers — GMA

By Christine F. Esguerra and Jeremaine Arong

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESterday ordered the filing of charges against the agencies that recruited 137 Filipino bus drivers now stranded and complaining for refuge in the United Arab Emirates.

Ms Arroyo also ordered hauled to court any government official found to be formally or informally involved with CHH International Services and Placement Agency Inc., according to Labor Secretary Brigido Dilo.

At the same event, the President ordered Labor Secretary Marianito Roque to attend to the stranded drivers and try to find them new jobs in Dubai "or elsewhere in the Middle East."

Ms Arroyo released last Tuesday from Dubai where she was told there were at least 200,000 jobs available for Filipino workers.

Quoting Roque, Raymundo said the Department of Labor and Employment was arranging for the transfer of the drivers from Dubai to Qatar. Roque had also ordered the immediate suspension of the recruitment agency.

While assuring possible employment, the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (Polo) was told to attend to their "welfare," Ermita said.

Meanwhile, 11 of the stranded drivers arrived at home yesterday after they were repatriated by the Polo and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration.

Two of the drivers—Ayda Lanuza and Arlina Menandro—arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport around 2:45 p.m. on board Qatar Airways. Another two arrived around 4:30 p.m. via Kuwait Airways, and seven a Philippine Air Lines around 8 p.m.

The plight of the drivers was made public by the Blas F. Ople Policy Center, which noted that the drivers' contracts with recruitment firms was licensed by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA).

"The thing is, we keep telling the public to deal only with licensed recruitment agencies. In this case, the drivers followed that advice. We believe that the POEA must ensure the ends of unscrupulous agencies like CHH," said Jason Ople, head of the center.

"The sheer number of victims involved constitutes an act of economic sabotage by the licensed agency," Ople said, adding that the agency should be investigated for illegal recruitment and human trafficking.

"We urge immediate action and for the owners of the agency to be barred from leaving the country," he added.

The drivers reportedly shelled out P200,000 each in placement fees only to find themselves stranded in Dubai with no work.

The drivers said they got the placement money from lending agencies in Dubai purportedly recommended by the Philippine consul secretary. The loans were supposedly payable in 15 months. The drivers were made to sign post-dated checks.

They were told they were to work for RAK's Road and Transport Authority for three years.

Ang Kapatiran numbers

ANG KAPATIRAN PARTY-LIST has opened the nomination for the party's standard bearer in the 2010 elections, yesterday said to dividuals or groups interested in nominating anyone for president may send a text or e-mail to the party.

The information must be based on Section 5(b)(1), secretary-general of AKP, through her number 09189714..or by e-mail, angkapatiranpartylist@yahoo.com. He can also be reached at his mobile number 0918-9356585. The AKP website is angkapatiranparty.org.

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marie france

Failon wife fighting for life; news anchor faces arrest

From page A1

was not being ruled out.

"We found inconsistencies in his statement and the statement of the maid," said Mabuyog, chief of the Quezon City Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit. Police ordered that the bathroom where his bloodied wife was found to be cleaned, he said.

The maid and the houseboy who did the cleaning were arrested earlier last night, but police were yet to take Failon into custody in his house, where Vice President Noli de Castro, a friend and former broadcast colleague, and lawyers were keeping him company.

A police source said a paraffin test showed that Failon was negative for powder burns.

In an interview over ABS-CBN late last night, Failon said his wife had left him in a hurry, saying she was sorry for gave no details.

"It's about family business," he said, recounting that he attempted to sort out this problem with her the previous night. "I told her we came from nothing, why should that be a problem?" Failon said to Filipino, his voice breaking.

"Everyone inside the house, including Ted Failon, is a suspect," Mabuyog said, referring to the broadcaster's household on Gen. Aguino Street in the Tierra Pura subdivision in Quezon City.

"I immediately went home and saw that the bathroom door was locked. I had the door opened and I found my wife bloodied, so I rushed her to the hospital," he said.

But in its early evening newscast yesterday, ABS-CBN reported two different versions of the incident.

According to one version, which quoted an official of the Quezon City police, Failon shot his wife in the head or required to clear up.

According to the other version, Failon admitted having had a spat with his wife, and that when he came home after his radio program yesterday he found her bloodied in their bathroom.

The conflicting reports were aired shortly before ABS-CBN aired Failon's statement in media-driven.

'It's a tragedy'

Police have found a purported suicide note, in which Yolanda Hong allegedly sought forgiveness.

The handgun, a Walther PPK .380, was found in the bedroom, which, according to Mabuyog, had been cleaned.

Mabuyog said Failon had been administered a paraffin test, and that the broadcaster had admitted quarreling with his wife on Tuesday night.

Failon was overheard saying that "it's a tragedy," and that "the media should let it be" because "it's a private matter."

Subsel, ABS-CBN corporate communications head Bing Gimbo said in a statement: "We appeal to everyone to please respect the privacy of Ted Failon and his family. His wife is fighting for her life."

Mabuyog said that despite the suicide note, police were not considering the wound a suicide attempt because of the position of the gun and the gunshot wound.

JUNE 9, 2001: photo of newly elected Congressman Ted Failon taking his oath before President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang. With him are his wife Trinidad and daughters.

THE FAILON residence at Tierra Pura in Quezon City

Ted Failon's statement sent by ABS-CBN

HINDI KO NA TINAPOS ANG AKING programa sa ALAMAT kanina sa mga mahigpit kong tagahanga ang aking asawa sa telepono. Kaya ernest ako kanyad at sinagot ako kung naka kaya-

nasabi ang gusto ng kanyan. Pinakiusapan ko ang pero ni kathyapinan ko ang aking asawa sa dapat na kung kaya't ibinalot ko sya kanyad sa ospital.

"It appears to be a clear alam...through and through[ang] coma," said a resident physician at the Veterans General Hospital. "The entry point is on the left side of the temporal area..."

Mabuyog said Failon had requested the police not to take him to the police station and to continue the investigation at his house.

Well-wishers

Vice President Noli de Castro, a colleague and close friend of Failon's, and businessman Delfin Lee arrived at about 8:30 p.m. at the broadcaster's house upon his request.

De Castro is also a resident of the Tierra Pura subdivision.

In an interview on the phone, De Castro said he went to see Failon because he was worried about his friend and the latter's family.

"I was able to speak with him, but I still not speak for him. It's not value mercy Bilok. But the police are now talking with him," De Castro said in a mix of Filipino and English.

According to the Vice President, his immediate concern is the monitoring of Failon's condition.

"So a friend, I am praying that Ted's life will be saved, and that the whole family will get through this," De Castro said.

He begged off from commenting further, saying: "The police have started their investigation. Let us allow them to do their work."

Witnesses' accounts

Mabuyog said initial investigation showed that Trinidad Hong was taken to the hospital by her sister Pamela, the family driver identified only as Glen, and another male believed to be Failon.

A witness said Failon was crying when he brought his wife to the hospital's emergency room.

Another witness told the reporter that he saw Failon leaving the ER in a bloody polo shirt and wearing rumpled trunk, apparently to avoid identification by police.

Failon's driver, identified only as Glen, and another male believed to be Failon, finally delove identified only as Glen, and another male believed to be Failon.

A witness said Failon was crying when he brought his wife to the hospital's emergency room.

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Another witness told the reporter that he saw Failon leaving the ER in a bloody polo shirt and wearing rumpled trunk, apparently to avoid identification by police.

A gardener of Failon's neighbor told the reporter that before noon, he saw the broadcaster in a bloody shirt about to board the Pajero in his garage with another woman who was weeping. But he did not see Failon's wife.

The gardener also said he did not hear gunshots coming from Failon's house with glass windows.

Police investigators were only able to interview witnesses in the hospital and to get Failon's address at around 4 p.m., or more than five hours later, because hospital personnel did not immediately allow interviews with the witnesses.

Hospital personnel also barred reporters from entering the premises and refused to issue a statement.

Sources said ABS-CBN had ordered a news blackout for several hours upon Failon's request.

'What happened?'

Head Insp Gerardo Imotol of the Tierra Pura security said they were not informed about the shooting and only found out about it when the police arrived at around 4 p.m.

Police said that when they got to the Failon house, they found that the Pajero had been washed.

This was how a resident physician described the start of events:

Upon arrival and after logging down and names to immediately attend to his wife, Failon asked everyone in the ER not in allow reporters or police personnel to enter the hospital premises. "Sir, media, sir police, please, wait lang po, sir."

While attending to the patient, the ER staff asked what were considered standard questions, but Failon refused to answer even the most basic: What happened? How did the patient get the gunshot wound?

He remained silent, was in tears and visibly very worried.

The only information he gave the hospital, verbally and in writing on the official hospital form he partners, was the patient's name, Trinidad Hong, and her age, 45.

He managed to woefully tell the ER staff that the patient was his wife and a nurse Nurse doo ejay, nurse dee, just nang jack."

Baseball cap

But the doctors, nurses and staff of the ER did not immediately recognize that the man who had brought the patient was Failon.

Some of the guards remarked, "Si Ted Failon yan, eh," but they were not sure because the man wore a baseball cap and his eyes were barely visible, according to the hospital staff.

They were only able to ascertain that the man was indeed the broadcaster when the hospital operator received a phone call from someone from ABS-CBN asking for Ted Failon. When the operator asked the man in the baseball cap if he would take the call, he said no, and repeated his appeal to the hospital staff: "No media, no police, please, please," the resident physician said.

When news calls came, and upon knowing that reporters were inquiring about him, Failon continued to sit without saying a word, but still in tears, the physician said.

The hospital administrator, Dr. Salvador Campos, said the management did not exactly heed Failon's request to prevent the media and the police from entering the premises.

"Our immediate concern was to attend to the patient," Campos said, adding that they, too, were surprised to see Failon in a distraught state.

IN THE KNOW

Failon on Erap's Senate list

TED FAILON, WHO WAS RECENTly included by deposed President Joseph Estrada in the opposition's list of possible senatorial candidates in 2010, is a broadcaster of television giant ABS-CBN and his sister is Cebu governor Gwen.

He is also a former representative of Leyte.

Failon was born on March 29, 1962, in Tacloban City. He grew up there and in Dumaguete City, where his father Jose worked as a jeepney driver and his mother Josefina worked as a market vendor.

To support his studies, Failon worked as a waiter, construction worker and disc jockey, among others.

He took up economics at the Colegio de San Juan de Letran in Manila but transferred to the University of the Visayas in Tacloban, where he took up mass communications.

While studying in 1982, he worked as a driver and a reporter of local radio station DYMM.

Failon quit school after getting married in 1983. He continued working at dyMM, where he eventually became an announcer, until 1986. That year, he started working as program director of dwDJ-99F in Angeles City, Pampanga.

His career in ABS-CBN started in 1988, when he was hired as a desk editor. He rose from the ranks, becoming a segment reporter of the news program "TV Patrol," a relievers anchor, and eventually a news anchor. He also became news manager of dyMM.

Failon gained popularity for winning the award-winning TV show "Sisyf Giving," which exposed the inefficiency and abuses of government officials and private individuals.

He returned to school in 1994 and received a broadcast communications degree from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines two years later. He later took up law at Arellano University, but did not finish the course.

Failon entered politics in 2001, running for representative of the first district of Leyte. He beat incumbent Alfred Romualdez, a nephew of former first lady Imelda Marcos.

When his term ended in 2004, he returned to broadcasting.

Failon is currently an anchor of "TV Patrol World" and a columnist for the program "Usapang Failon at Tunay."

He has received awards for his work, among them the Gawaran ng mga Broadkaster ng Pilipinas' Golden Dove Awards, Catholic Mass Media Awards and Star Awards for Television. Cyril L. Bonalberan, Inquirer Research

Church not told again on Vatican post appointment

From page A1

cisa Bigues, who heads the CBCP's Episcopal Commission on Public Affairs, said they did not know Tumon.

Bigues said he had learned of Iñiguez's resignation only from the report of the Inquirer yesterday.

Pabillo said he had yet to speak with Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales on Tumon's appointment, which, he pointed out, "should have gone through a consultation with the bishops and the apostolic nuncio (or the Vatican envoy)."

"That should have been the process, but I don't know if the process was followed," Pabillo said.

Last year, Archbishop Rosales expressed disappointment over Deputy Secretary Manuel Arroyo's sudden decision to replace Leonido Ibes, the longtime Philippine ambassador to the Vatican, with Tumon.

Bishop Leonardo Medroso, chair of the CBCP Episcopal Commission on Canon Law, had said they were consulted by Malacañang about Ibe's appointment.

No political reason

Iñiguez's husband, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, yesterday denied that the quit the ambassadorship because she was ill and not because of any political issues.

"Kung ito pumasyo ang sinasa ko ay mahaba [I don't want to kill my wife with words]," the senator told reporters, adding that there was no need for her to work, anyway.

On Tuesday, the senator said his wife resigned from her job before the Holy Week because she was suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita confirmed on Tuesday night that Iñiguez had quit her post and had been replaced by Tumon, who was reportedly married to the late Ben Tumon, a first cousin of Ms Arroyo's husband.

Tumon is a founding member of the Bigay Puso Foundation, which distributes care packages to families around Metro Manila and builds wells and solar dryers in 40 provinces.

She is affiliated with the Gawad Kalinga Bigay Puso Village in Batangas, the Pro Life Organizations and a number of other charitable groups.

She is a Dame of the Order of Malta, whose members provide care for the sick, medical services for the poor, and relief goods for disaster-stricken barangays. With a report from Christina O. Hernandez

Teodoro supporters turn to the Internet

From page A1

Teodoro Jr., who last month announced his intention to run for president in 2010, have turned to the Internet to advertise his candidacy to the electorate, especially to young voters.

The site—www.gilbertteodoro.com—makes a pitch for the Harvard-trained lawyer who, in a TV interview on Tuesday, said his **senatorial Cabinet** job has been keeping his "options" open when it comes to playing on the ground.

Teodoro then conceded he may be lacking in name appeal because his responsibilities as defense chief "restricted a lot of (those)."

The secretary of defense, I am not given much option in terms of being 'make noise' because if I said something wrong, a life might be endangered," he said ABC.

If he gets lucky

Online shortly after Teodoro announced his plans for 2010, the website features his profile, his vision for the country, his speeches, and news, photos and video archives of his activities.

The site also invites visitors to sign up as they can be enlisted as volunteers in the event Teodoro "gets lucky" and mounts a full campaign, according to his spokesperson, lawyer Nelson Venzon.

"We're not asking the people to vote for him. We are just informing them who he is so that when the opportunity comes and he gets lucky, they will be able to make an informed choice," Venzon told the Inquirer at Lung Aguinaldo yesterday.

Venzon said he and his friends decided to put up the website since today's youth rely more on the Internet rather than on the traditional ret.media for news and information.

Facebook, too

The website carries the tagline "GT 2010. Unang ang Tama, Unang ng Tapat (Do what is right, do it with honesty)," its motif derived from the colors and insignia of the Philippine flag.

The creators yesterday showed that some 11,300 visitors have browsed the site.

It also offers a link to Teodoro's account on Facebook, the same popular social networking site that added **millage** to the successful US presidential campaign of Barack Obama last year.

Teodoro's Facebook page on the heads of around 200 "friends," among them another presidential aspirant, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay; Environment Secretary Lito Atienza, Navotas Rep. Tobi Golez and Mountaineer Rep. Rolly Revon, among others.

Teodoro also has moderate access on MySpace.

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2009

PNP chief vows action vs vigilantes

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE chief yesterday ordered his men to intensify an investigation into reports that vigilantes had killed hundreds of suspected criminals in the south over the past decade.

Jesus Verzosa, PNP director-general, said he had ordered the regional police chief "to gather evidence and file criminal charges against suspects involved in these killings" in Davao City.

"With more leads to work on and more evidence to establish a strong case, I am confident that we can achieve a more favorable result in the investigation very soon," he said in a statement.

Verzosa also called on Speaker Prospero Nograles, who represents Davao City, to share with police the information on the vigilantes that the legislator had earlier said he had compiled.

800 killed

This comes amid growing criticism of accounts that vigilantes killed about 800 suspected criminals—including juvenile delinquents—in Davao over the past decade, allegedly with the "tacit support" of local officials.

Many of the vigilante killings were organized by police to feature policemen, the New York-based Human Rights Watch group said in a report earlier this month.

Human Rights Watch criticized the national government for failing to act on the killings, saying that the investigations were "perfunctory."

Verzosa denied the killings were "state-sponsored," adding that such accusations "were made without the benefit of hard evidence." He stressed that the national police could only "act against suspects if it has established probable cause, legally obtained evidence, or gathered sworn affidavits from witnesses and family of victims."

"Therefore, we need the support and cooperation of the citizenry, especially those who are willing to testify in court against these suspects," he added.

Human Rights Watch, however, said witnesses were reluctant to come forward because they feared the authorities and believed that they would not act on their complaints. AFP

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GOODBYE, JOE
Mavel Capodicia (second from left), widow of the late Press Undersecretary Joe Capodicia, children Mica and Joe Jr. and sister Celia Sangco hold the urn containing Joe's ashes in yesterday's interment at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina. Capodicia died along with seven other government officials in a helicopter crash last week. NOY MORALES

Ex-Shell exec in tax credit scam says he was denied due process

THE FORMER GENERAL MANAGER OF Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. who was one of those charged in the P226-million tax credit scam has accused the Office of the Ombudsman of violating his rights to due process.

Davidson Cruz has asked the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court to suspend the proceedings against him and allow him to petition the Office of the Ombudsman to review, take it over and review its findings.

In his motion, Cruz said he learned about the charges against him only from news reports.

He said the Ombudsman's office did not give him a chance to defend himself when it failed to serve him a copy of the order to file a counter-affidavit and other "controverted" evidence, as well as a copy of the Ombudsman resolution charging him. He said this was in violation of his right to due process.

The Office of the Ombudsman filed last month plunder and graft charges in connection with the tax credit scam against 23 former Shell officials and private individuals, including Cruz. They were charged with defrauding the government through the use of fraudulently acquired tax credit certificates.

Cruz was the general manager of Pilipinas Shell when the oil company obtained tax credit certificates (TCCs) from Ilaw Piso Textile Industrial Corp. (Filtex) which it used to settle its tax obligations with the government.

The TCCs turned out to have been fraudulently obtained, however, as Filtex was not qualified for the tax credits.

TCCs are refund payments that export companies are allowed to claim for duties paid on imported raw materials used in the manufacture of products for re-export. The government issues TCCs instead of cash to funds which companies can use to settle tax obligations. Companies can also sell the TCCs to other companies.

Filtex is one of several textile companies owned by Emerlito Chingkoe and his wife Grace, the main respondents in the tax credit scam case.

The Chingkoes, officers of their companies and former finance officials allegedly conspired to have P2.3 billion worth of TCCs fraudulently issued to Filtex and to other Chingkoe companies between 1998 and 1999. The Chingkoe companies sold the TCCs to other companies which the latter used to settle their tax obligations.

After conducting preliminary investigation, the Office of the Ombudsman filed the cases against the 23 individuals with the Sandiganbayan last month. The anti-graft court has ordered the arrest of the respondents.

Cruz, who has posted bail, asked the court to halt the proceedings against him pending the result of the appeal with the Office of the Ombudsman to clear/exonerate and reconsider its order charging him with plunder and graft.

He said this would give the Office of the Ombudsman the opportunity to reconsider its order and him (Cruz) the chance to be heard. Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Chinese poachers nabbed

By Alexis Pajo

LOCAL FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL officials in Palawan last week nabbed Chinese poachers attempting to make away with 14 endangered sea turtles.

According to a statement from the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF-Philippines), the seven Chinese poachers were arrested off the Cuallo Isle in northern Palawan on April 7.

Gregg Yan, WWF-Philippines information officer, said a team from the Municipal Environmental Desk Officer (MEDO) and Joint Task Force Mahimpapsa (JTM) responded to text messages relying an unidentified speedboat were fishing right inside El Nido's marine protected waters.

After a brief chase, the commercial speedboat was apprehended near Caramoan Island.

Recovered from the boat were the carcasses of 13 green sea turtles and one live turtle smuggling in the suspects' nets. The marine turtle was quickly released and released by the staff of the El Nido-Taytay Managed Resource Protected Area Office, WWF-PHILIPPINES.

Also recovered were fishing paraphernalia.

"There are but the latest in a long line of poachers who excessively upset Philippine waters to plunder our nation's dwindling marine resources. Each turtle killed is a fast-forward button towards extinction. We have to raise the alarm and We must continue in prosecuting offenders if we are to stamp out this trade," said WWF Project Manager Ed de la Calzada.

JTM-Commander Ericliton Cortes also said they will continue to protect northern Palawan's marine sanctuaries. "These lowly worms and illegal nets only shame the country's natural resources."

The Chinese poachers were identified as Lu Guang, Huang Chin Phong, Sun Mu Li, Liang, Young Hao Fuo, Li Fang Yin and Tan Shi Fong.

Thick clouds hamper anew recovery of crash victims

TUGUEGARAO CITY—FOR THE SECOND time on Wednesday, thick clouds hampered rescue teams from retrieving the seven bodies from the Robinson's-made helicopter plane that crashed in Sitio Buyang in Barangay San Miguel in Baggao, Cagayan.

Lt. Col. Jesus Espino, Philippine Air Force tactical operations group commander, said rescue teams aboard two Huey helicopters were sent to retrieve the bodies but they could not reach the crash site because of the thick clouds.

The twin-engine plane owned by Chonnel Aviation Corp. was found by the rescue crew in Isabela when it crashed in a mountain slope on April 2.

The wreckage was found on Tuesday afternoon.

After two attempts to land, the rescue choppers dropped 15 soldiers at the foothills of San Miguel in Baggao to bring food supplies to the 13 volunteers who had been securing the crash site. The soldiers also brought with them rubber bags.

No landing area

Espino said they would take on Thursday the rescue operations at the foothills to clear an area that would serve as a temporary landing site of the Huey helicopters.

He estimated that the crash site was 3,000 feet above sea level, which had been engulfed by thick clouds.

"We were 1,500 feet lower than the crash site so thick clouds could not be penetrated. In doing so, we are also endangering the safety of the retrieval teams and others on the two choppers," he said.

The area is camouflaged by brownish-like leaves, preventing an outright landing near the area, he said.

Bob Ello, Chonnel manager, said the bodies would be brought to Tuguegarao City for autopsy.

Some relatives of the victims bewailed the rescue team's delay in rescue and recovery operations. They asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to intervene to speed up the recovery of the bodies.

Volunteers

Kalinga Board Member Antonio Balidlan, cousin of Jessie Balidlan who was one of the fatalities, said he and other local government officials were willing to lend more volunteers to help the volunteers securing the site.

Anita Baggao, wife of Bridacan town commander Abelardo Baggao, another fatality, said the pain of losing a husband was aggravated by the delay in the retrieval of the bodies.

The other fatalities were Cipriano Teresa Valera and Rosary Ruiz, pilot and co-pilot, respectively; SPO2 Rolly Cantalejo, Colorado Sinsongan, Maconacon local government driver; and Joel Bardin, Bagabal village chief; Wilhelmar Manyo-it, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Plane crashes in Isabela since 1999

• Dec. 12, 2003: A twin-engine turbo propeller plane owned by Chonnel crashed on a mountain slope of Barong Dalaga in Diamantar to Dinapigue town. The wreckage was found two days later. Killed were Capt. Lucberto Melo, the plane's pilot, Capt. Marvin Regis, co-pilot, and Mario Valdez, crew chief. The plane was en route back to Tuguegarao City after taking passengers in Maconacon town.

• May 20, 2003: A single-engine Cessna plane crashed on the mountain slope of Barong Dalaga at the Sierra Madre mountain range in Dinapigue. The bodies of Capt. Rolando Castillo, plane pilot, and passengers Hayden Cabrera and her two children, Hazel, 3, and Nicole, 2, were recovered eight days later.

• Dec. 7, 1999: An Asian Spirit twin-engine turboprop plane crashed in Mt. Sinapatong in Cabarroguis, Quirino, killing 21 people on board. Wilhelmar Manyo-it, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Fil-Am vets receive 1st batch of checks

By Cynthia D. Balana

FILIPINO-AMERICAN WAR veterans in the United States received last week the first batch of checks from the US government representing their long- sum compensation for services rendered during World War II, the Philippine embassy in Washington reported yesterday.

The checks were handed out at a reception hosted by Philippine Ambassador to the US Willy C. Gaa at the Philippine embassy in commemoration the "Araw ng Kagitingan" on April 8.

Gaa did not mention how many veterans were included in the first batch.

Rep. Major Gen. Antonio Taguba, who represented US Veterans Administration Secretary Gen. Eric Shinseki, handed out checks to qualified veterans who were present at the reception.

New benefits

The checks were part of the benefits Filipino veterans were able to secure after decades of lobbying the US Congress for recognition and compensation for their services and sacrifices during World War II by virtue of the economic stimulus package approved by US President Barack Obama.

The checks were accompanied by a letter from Shinseki stating that the benefit is by application "had been received and duly approved."

One of the recipients was Alberto Basani, a 98-year old Filipino-American veteran who said in his remarks that (the check) "has brought about a contentious feeling of happiness and full delight to us veterans at this time."

Under the stimulus law, veterans who are US citizens will receive a one-time payment of $15,000 while whom who are living outside the US will get $9,000. The compensation is on top of other benefits which they are getting both from the US and Philippine governments.

Historic moment

In his remarks, Gaa called on everyone to "remember those who fought in defense of our nation and people so that we can live today in freedom and liberty."

For his part, Taguba said : "I cannot underscore enough the significance of today's ceremony. It is not only a day of remembrance of those who fought valiantly in Bataan, but a historic moment for those who have long been pained and those who are sick as this evening."

A news crew from the ABC News network featured in its evening news program the embassy's celebration of "Araw ng Kagitingan," along with a brief background on the Filipino veterans' struggle and victory to achieve recognition and benefits from the US government for their services in WWII.

The coverage also included footage and a report on the "Araw ng Kagitingan" activities of the Philippine Consulate located in Chicago and interviews of Chicago-based Filipino veterans.

Opposition says Palace out to neutralize Erap

From page A1

and another one was clearly intended to "neutralize" Estrada, who remains the leading figure of the opposition.

"It is incredible that after nine years the cases of the Boise Cascade day and IMF-Singsonco are being revived to emphasize President Estrada," Ejercito said in a statement.

"He knows nothing of those cases. Is it not enough what they did in 2004?" he added. The filing of plunder charges against Estrada that year led to his arrest. He was convicted in September 2007 and pardoned the next month.

Further, they are threatened by the continuing support of the Filipino masses for President Erap," Ejercito said.

Another son of the former President, Senate President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada, said linking his father to the IMF and Boise Cascade cases "is another attempt to tarnish the credibility and integrity of President Estrada."

MEMBERS of a group called Kilusan Para sa Katotohanan mark from the Manila Pilot Center to the Supreme Wednesday to demand justice for Bubby Dacer, Emmanuel Corbito, Edgar Bentazar and other victims whose cases involve Sen. Panfilo Lacson. JOAN BONDOC

Open to running again

The elder Estrada has signalled his openness to the possibility of running again for president, although he has consistently said that the offshoot of his ouster has been much, and that he is still trying to heal the pains of the people.

A group of legal luminaries consulted by the Estrada camp, including former Chief Justice Andres Narvasa, had opined that the former President was still eligible to run, considering that the Constitution merely prohibits the incumbent president from seeking reelection, according to Marganas Jul. code, Estrada's spokesperson.

Estrada said the legal experts also noted that Estrada had only served two-and-a-half years in office before he was forced to step down in the 2001 Edsa uprising.

On Tuesday, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said there would be a "breakup" between the DPP and the Dacer camp, following an order by the Court of Appeals to pursue the criminal prosecution of Tay and seven others for murder and kidnapping.

But, a senior contributor to Estrada's 1998 presidential campaign, Bob Ong, said he believed the camp would be brought to court to answer the illegal trading practices that mostly around the collapse of the Philippine stock market in 1998.

Atomic bomb

Gonzalez said yesterday that the BW stock manipulation scandal and the murder of publisher Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito threatened to implicate more people apart from those who were previously linked to the crime.

"Certainly there will be political implications on things. If you'll be able to piece things together in the BW and the Dacer case, that's an atomic bomb," Gonzalez said.

He said his office was validating several pieces of information it received that the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced that it would reopen its probe of the Dacer-Corbito murder case with the impending exhibition of top suspects Cesar Mancera Jr. Glenn Dumlao and Michael Ray Aquino who fled to the United States.

The justice secretary said the recent order of the Court of Appeals to pursue the criminal case against Tay and seven co-accused could hasten the investigation of the double murder.

Asked if he believed that there behind the BW stock manipulation had the motive to kill Dacer, Gonzalez replied: "I don't think that everybody will have the same kind (of motive), only those who will be most affected probably," he said after a long pause.

"If we can validate all these things we've been told, some people who have not even been mentioned before I may be implicated. There is a big scandal," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez denied that the senior citizen petition had any bearing in reviving the BW case that implicated Estrada.

He was reacting to the Estrada camp's claims that the BW case was revived to thwart the former President's political plans.

"That will be trying to politicize the decision of the Ca. Everyone knows that the case had been pending in the Court of Appeals for some time now. It has nothing to do with the presidential ambitions of anybody," Gonzalez said.

He said he "never anticipated" that the appellate court would hand down an order to revive the criminal charges against Tay and seven others. The DOJ was planning to reopen the investigation of the Atienza murder of Dacer and Corbito.

Plums from heaven

"This (Gadzetion) was meant to be heaven," he said.

The 1999 ruling that ran the risks of stocks of the gaming company skyrocket was included in the impeachment and plunder charges made against Estrada.

Gonzalez had said the BW scandal was linked to the double murders.

Dacer and Corbito were abducted in 2000 by operatives of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (now defunct) while in their way to Manila Hotel where Dacer was supposed to meet former President Fidel Ramos.

Investigation showed the two were strangled and their remains burned. The remains were later recovered in a creek in Indang, Cavite.

Gonzalez said documents in Dacer's possession were also burned.

Media striptease

Opposition Senators Panfilo Lacson and Francis Escudero ridiculed the DOJ's drop in "media striptease" on the war crimes.

Lacson called the DOJ a "disheartening to "be prudent enough to come up with solid evidence before opening their mouths."

Lacson has been implicated in the killing of Dacer and Corbito. Marcelo Lacson's former police aide, executed an affidavit accusing the senator of ordering the murder when he was the head of the national police.

Escudero called on Gonzalez, who he said "has become a master at looking into and prone of innocents to media," to "read the virtual striptease."

Nothing to fear

Estrada said friends were not particularly concerned about the reported link between the murder of Dacer and the BW case.

Estrada "is confident that there is no cause against him. He said he's innocent and he has nothing to fear," Estrada said.

Speaking at a media forum in San Juan City, Estrada said Estrada was not threatened by the possibility that the case would be used for political purposes, although there is his issue aside had exposed corners like the likely source of some of the various administrations.

Estrada said Estrada had not even talked to his lawyers about the BW case. "Estrada is confident he can answer all the charges and that he is innocent. He's willing to help the investigation and answer all the charges," she said.

JDV won't testify at Senate on ZTE

From page A1

the country.

No compelling reason

In a letter dated April 13, De Venecia formally informed the Senate blue ribbon committee chaired by Sen. Richard Gordon that he would not be coming because there is no reason for him to face the upper chamber after he had spilled the beans in the House of Representatives.

In the first place, he said he had received a written invitation to appear before the committee.

"Hence, it is not correct for some media reports to insinuate that I have chosen to be 'largely silent' on this controversy," he said.

De Venecia, who for the speakership in February led your heroines of his won't role in the ZTE-NBN controversy said that through statements he publicly informed Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago's House blue ribbon chair "that at congressman, I may go to testify before the House of Representatives."

But De Venecia said he was aware that the investigation was about to be completed, and that his son and namesake, Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, had appeared before the committee last year as a "principal witness."

Privilege speech

He then asked the committee to take cognizance of his privilege speech that touched on the subject and his testimony in the House committee on justice on the impeachment complaint lodged against Mr. Arroyo, which included the charge of corruption on the NBN-ZTE issue.

De Venecia said that even without his personal appearance, the committee has resource from which to extract information on the same issue, including his audiovisual presentation.

Finally, "Global Filipino," The book, published in December 2008, detailed the involvement of the First Family in the ZTE deal.

Golf course in Sherana

De Venecia then formally offered to withdraw the picture taken on a golf course in Barcelona, China that showed him, the Arroyo couple and then Commission on Elections chair Benjamin Abalos Sr.

Abalos was accused by the younger De Venecia of brokering the deal and of offering bribes so that ZTE could bag the NBN contract.

Reynaldo Seid, then director general of the Authority of Economic and Development Authority, also accused Abalos of offering him P200 million in exchange for his endorsement of the ZTE proposal. Seid had said he did not accept Abalos' offer.

ZTE-sponsored game

The elder De Venecia said it was "a ZTE-sponsored golf game that was followed by lunch at the ZTE board room in Shenzen. In 2006 to which I was surprisingly invited by the chairman."

Following the event, the NBN-ZTE project—originally based on a 200-person project—was BOT (build-operate-transfer) investment—became an overpriced 496-person Philippine government-to-government (G2G) project, with a 130-person Philippine government-to-government (G2G) project.

The NBN project was to be funded by China through a soft loan.

Back off

The President's husband was linked to the deal when the younger De Venecia accused him of throwing a finger at him and telling him to "back off" the project.

De Venecia took pains to explain that neither he nor his son could be criminally liable just because Joey, as owner of Amsterdam Holdings, Inc. (AHI), had submitted an unsolicited proposal on the NBN project and Joey was its founder.

He said the offer was not considered.

De Venecia said his son's participation was not covered by any prohibition in the Constitution or any provision of law.

While he laughed off the First Family, De Venecia seemed his hands off the controversial deal.

De Venecia denied lobbying for his son's proposal, saying he did not sign an APB letter to the Department of Transportation and Communications. He said he did not make any public endorsement of his son's offer, either.

"I must reiterate that there was no pressure or undue influence that was ever exerted or employed by me over any government agencies or office to favor anyone, (and) for AHI, to deal, if I wanted to, I could have talked to or appealed directly to the President of the Philippines for AHI, and personally to the Chairman of NEDA," he said.

From a BOT, the project was later converted into a concessional loan when the DOTC entered into a supply contract with ZTE.

De Venecia, author of the BOT Law, said the NBN project "is not a BOT project. It never would involve any government loan, no guarantee and no expense at all to the people."

Clear conscience

He said his conscience was clear. "If I had chosen the easy way out, I might have gone through the motions of disagreeing with my son, Joey III. I only have even pretended to expedite him in his aspirations against the President and First Gentleman."

If I had done that, I might well be the Speaker of the House and president of the ruling Lakas-CMD party until now. All that I might have done. But I knew I would not be able to sleep with my conscience," he added.

He said he had no detailed personal knowledge of the extent of his son's participation in AHI or in any other company. "My son has been a grown man long time on his own, financially and socially. I have not interfered in his personal affairs, much less in his business undertakings," the former Speaker said.

Political source

Gordon earlier described De Venecia as a "political source," but Cayetano said he would ask the Senate to take cognizance of the records of the House proceedings mentioned by De Venecia.

Cayetano has been asking Gordon to conduct another hearing on the deal to allow De Venecia and officials of telecommunications companies to testify.

With De Venecia's letter, Gordon is expected to come up with a decision on the issue. The senator was already pressing a second draft report, but declined to make this public at this point.

Senate to probe Villar amid cries of 'political rubout'

From page A1

VILLAR

LACSON

MADRIGAL

ofthed the million residents in Binondoque, Las Piñas and parts of Cavite.

Rules of procedure call on the committee to first discuss complaints during a meeting, where their sponsors is decided before it officially from the record is sought.

But in the case of Villar, who was ousted as Senate president last Nov. 17 after the alleged send-a-sandal in Binondoque City emerged, the finding of such devices in form and substance of the Madrigal complaint was reached by the committee Tuesday.

Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, a confidant of Villar, accused the committee of "political rubout."

"It's too shocking when the other committee did. The members refused by Lacson (yesterday) aimed to deceive people to make it appear that Senator Villar is being given due process," said Cayetano.

Cayetano discovered on Tuesday night the committee had already signed the order ahead of yesterday's meeting. He gave the impression a copy of the order.

"What was today's meeting for? A mere-mere? A merienda?" said Cayetano after the meeting.

"There's no first hearing and yet there's already a resolution," he said.

Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago Presented Jr. said the chamber had decided to hold a session on Monday to look into the committee's action on Villar.

Double-standard

"There is much to fear by all the members because the ethics committee was not new to do what it wants," Pimentel said.

Sen. Ilito Revilla accused the committee of adopting a double standard, pointing out that in other cases involving civil cases pending before the panel, the accused were being asked to comment even before a hearing has been conducted to decide if the complaints have merit.

"The same fairness doctrine that we apply to senators must apply to all citizens," Revilla said. "Let us first establish fairness and uniformity in the complaints before we go out and ask people to respond."

Cayetano told Pimentel: "We have not yet determined if a preliminary inquiry is in order. We're just saying that there's sufficiency in form and substance to the complaint of Madrigal and we're giving the respondent five days to file his reply."

Voluminous evidence

In an interview with reporters later, Lacson said the premature signing of an order was "premature." He said that the committee should not be "disturbed" from its mandate, according to RA 10, its duty "to the speed the manner that we can do."

However, Sen. Loren Legarda said the Madrigal complaint had been backed by voluminous documents and even caused the specific issues funded by the government, which benefited the party rivalries built by Villar's real estate companies.

Only Lacson, Revilla and Legarda showed up during the noon session meeting. The two other members, Senators Richard Gordon and Gregorio Honasan, were conspicuously absent.

The order stemmed from Senate Resolution No. 756 lodged by Madrigal against Villar for allegedly "using his position of power to influence public officials to intervening the C-5 road extension project to the Ortigas by pass (through) for properties."

Madrigal alleged that Villar "has interest" in the C-5 extension and Republic Act. No. 6713, otherwise known as the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials.

Executive session

Tackling other cases, the committee "requested" the Ombudsman's Juliet Lobregat to comment in five days on a complaint by Sen. Jinkey Atienza that she violated the confidentiality of an executive session Sept. 26, 2007 on the scuttled NBN-ZTE deal.

The committee refused to order detained Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV to comment on a charge by Sen. Michael Roberto Enrile that "he is unpatriotic" for his alleged attempt to lead an attempted coup d'etat against the government."

The order stemmed was applied to the fourth case tackled by the committee—the one-minute filed by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile Jr. and Senate President Manuel Villar for violations of the Anti-graft and Corrupt Practices Act against Gordon for accusing the private side of claim of the Philippine National Bail Corps while serving as senator.

The committee legal counsel Atty. Jose Luis Martin Gascon said that the comments of Trillanes and additional documents from Santiago and Libara being sought by the committee would aid the panel in determining sufficiency in form and substance of the senator's complaints. —With a report from Christina O. Rosadalis

Rare bird found in Candaba marsh

A JOINT FILIPINO-BRITISH team of ornithologists found a rare streaked reed warbler (Acrocephalus sorghophilus) during a recently concluded survey of the Candaba Marsh in Pampanga, according to the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines (WBCP).

Michael Lu, WBCP president, said the streaked reed warbler "is globally threatened" and was last seen at the Candaba Swamp eight years ago.

The small and inconspicuous species is a migrant from northeast Asia whose breeding grounds remain unknown to this day, according to Lu. It spends the winters exclusively in the Philippines.

Last year, a team from WBCP and the 10-based Bristol Bird Group surveyed the same marsh but did not find any streaked reed warblers. The search, however, led to the discovery of the black-browed reed warbler (Acrocephalus bistrigiceps), which turned out to be the first ever Philippine record.

This year's team, led by Britain Philip Round, a warbler expert based in Thailand, included WBCP researchers Custodio Espinola, Jonathan Villaruz and Lieuwood Allan.

They surveyed reed beds in six areas in central and northern Luzon, using five nylon mist nets. Despite catching and releasing a total of 235 birds, only one streaked reed warbler was found—in a stand of reeds in Candaba.

In the early 1990s, the streaked reed warbler was a common sight in Candaba in its preferred habitat of tall reeds by open water. In recent years, Lu said "its population declined almost to extinction due to habitat loss."

In spite of having been nominated as an internationally important wetland site under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, less than 3 percent of Candaba's original 32,000 hectares of marshy reed bed habitat remains. The rest have been converted to rice fields.

STREAKED REED WARBLER

Indeed, the survey team experienced difficulty locating areas of extensive reed beds anywhere in Central Luzon.

Other birds caught, ringed and released included 89 resident clamorous reed warblers (Acrocephalus stentoreus) and 57 other migrant warblers consisting of 48 oriental reed warblers (Acrocephalus orientalis) and 9 Middendorff's grasshopper warbler (Locustella ochotensis).

Captured birds were fitted with an alloy steel band on one leg. Each band was stamped "DENR Manila" and had a unique identifying number. This was the first time that bands specifically made for the Philippines were used. All data of the species, dates and locations of the birds are lodged with DENR. This way, band numbers of birds later captured or found dead, if communicated to the DENR, will help plot the movements and life history of Philippine birds.

Muslim cleric asked to help free 2 Red Cross workers

A SENIOR MUSLIM CLERIC has been called in to help negotiate the release of two Red Cross workers held captive for three months on Jolo Island, Jolo Gov. Abdusakur Tan said yesterday.

The two were same until now that the health of one of the hostages has deteriorated to the Sulu Sayyaf rebels' demand that the government release their captors have been conserved.

Tan, head of the negotiating team working to free the two International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) workers, said the region's chief "ulama," or Muslim preacher, would try to convince the Abu Sayyaf executive to release the hostages.

"This is our last-ditch effort to secure the safe release of the two hostages as peacefully as possible," Tan told a local radio station. He did not identify the cleric.

Swiss Andreas Notzli, Italian Eugenio Vagni and Filipina Mary Jean Lacaba were abducted while on a humanitarian mission on Jolo last. 15.

Italian needs surgery

Lacaba was freed April 2, but the group is still holding Vagni and Notzli and has threatened to behead one of them unless the government pulled out from around to release.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said the 42-year-old Vagni needed to be operated on for a hernia, and that his health had steadily deteriorated.

He called on the kidnappers to free the hostages or at least allow doctors in to assess Vagni's health.

The newest an operation said that can only be determined by a doctor," Puno, who flew into Jolo yesterday, told reporters.

He said former Sulu governor Abdusakur Tan Jr. was having a very difficult time moving around.

Tan said the Abu Sayyaf kidnappers were still demanding a troop withdrawal but he stressed the government would not comply with this unless the hostages were first released.

No arrest order

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita also announced yesterday that there was no order for the arrest of Sulu Vice Gov. Sun-Ann Sahidulla, who negotiated the release of Lacaba.

Sahidulla denied in a phone interview with the Inquirer yesterday she had gone into hiding. She said that she had been hospitalized in Manila for stress-related stomach problems.

But the also said she feared for her safety because the kidnappers demand for a troop pullout had not happened.

Sahidulla said she would resume her role as negotiator if given the authority to do so by Mohaimin.

Training with US troops

Also preventing hostage crisis spokesperson Lt. Col. Edgard Arevalo said about 100 Muslim had started training with their US counterparts on "fight and flee" the guerrilla-type skirmishes of the Abu Sayyaf group on Jolo.

After their two-month training, the soldiers will be rotated in 72 ships, hijacked 19 of them and held 14 vessels with more than 200 hostages from a dozen or so countries, including the Philippines.

The pirates say they are fighting illegal fishing and dumping of toxic waste in Somali waters but have come to operate hundreds of miles from there in a sprawling 1.5-million-square-mile danger zone.

Pirates can extort $1 million and more for each ship and crew, ransom estimates they raked in $130 million last year.

A flotilla of warships from nearly a dozen countries has patrolled the Gulf of Aden and nearby Indian Ocean waters in the shortest route from Asia to Europe and one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, created by more than 20,000 ships each year.

French rescue

The alternative route around the continent's southern Cape of Good Hope takes up to two weeks longer at huge expense.

In France, police on Wednesday have began questioning three Somali pirates who were brought to the country after being captured by commandos during a hostage rescue operation in the Indian Ocean.

French special forces captured the three on April 30 when they stormed the yacht Tanit to rescue its French crew from hostage-takers. Two pirates and the boat's French captain were killed during the rescue.

Rare prosecutors in the western French city of Rennes said the Somali gunmen were being interrogated by police in refrigerator officers. Defense Minister Hervé Morin said Tuesday they would face trial in France. AP/AFP

Somali pirates attack US freighter, seize 4 other ships

MOMBASA, KENYA—19 JANUARY of US President Barack Obama's vow to halt their hundreds piracy off the coast of Somalia attacked a US-flagged freighter with rocket fire and automatic weapons Tuesday, but the vessel escaped with only minor damage.

Loaded with humanitarian aid, the cargo ship MV Liberty Sun headed to Kenya under US Navy escort on Wednesday after the attack, the second in as many days. No injuries or casualties were reported in the American freighter in a week, officials said.

The pirates have seized four other vessels and about 60 hostages off the Horn of Africa since Sunday's course of an American freighter captain from a clothing lifeboat where he was held hostage. If they had been successful Tuesday, the Liberty Sun would have been the fifth.

The Liberty Sun's Somalian crew was not injured in the attack but the vessel sustained unspecified damages, owner Liberty Maritime Corp. said in a statement Tuesday night.

"We are under attack by pirates, we are being hit by rockets. Also bullets," crewmate Thomas Urbik, 26, wrote his mother in an e-mail Tuesday. "We are barricaded in the engine room and so far no one is hurt. (A) rocket penetrated the bulkhead but the hole is small. Small fire, no, but put out."

It was not immediately clear what happened next. Urbik sent a follow-up e-mail "this" and he was safe and they had a naval escort sailing them in," his mother, Mary Urbik, said.

A US Navy destroyer, the USS Bainbridge, responded to the attack but the pirates had departed by the time it arrived around 40 hours later, Navy Capt. Jack Standth said.

The Bainbridge is the same destroyer from which Navy SEAL snipers killed three pirates holding Capt. Richard Phillips captive aboard the powerboat lifeboat. A fourth pirate surrendered.

Phillips had been held captive for five days after offering himself to be held hostage in exchange for his crew during a thwarted hijacking of the US ship Maersk Alabama by the pirates last week.

The Bainbridge was carrying Phillips to Kenya when it was called to respond to the attack on the Liberty Sun.

The Liberty Sun, with its crew of about 20 Americans, was carrying humanitarian aid from Houston, Texas, to Mombasa, Human said.

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Nighttime raids

It's an unusual nighttime raid, pirates mined the Greek-managed bulk carrier MV Irene EM before dawn Tuesday. Dawn later, they commandeered the Lebanese-owned cargo ship MV Jim Stone.

On Sunday or Monday they took two Egyptian fishing trawlers.

Maritime officials said the

$1 million-plus per ship

After a lull at the beginning of the year because of rough seas, the pirates since the end of February have attacked at least 30 ships, hijacked 19 of them and held 14 vessels with more than 200 hostages from a dozen or so countries, including the Philippines.

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Palace to discourage seamen from working in ships plying Somali waters

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY said it would be discouraging employment agencies from hiring Filipinos for ships operating off the Somali coast.

The move does not amount to an outright ban, however, which may not work since Filipino seamen are not obliged to tell the government about their ship's routes, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

The labor department will ask agencies not to hire "Filipino seamen that will be plying the route of the Gulf of Aden and in the area where their hijacking or kidnapping is happening," Ermita said.

The Philippines is the world's leading supplier of shipping crews, with over 250,000 seamen manning oil tankers, luxury liners and passenger vessels worldwide, official statistics show.

There are 500 Filipino seamen aboard seven vessels in the hands of Somali pirates. This includes 21 Filipino crewmen aboard the Greek vessel Irene EM seized by pirates on Tuesday, Ermita said.

"At the moment, we have not gotten any feedback as to the advisability of issuing an official ban for Filipino seamen going there," Ermita said, conceding that the situation had become "very alarming."

The Philippines, he said, is prepared to "take an active part" should the United Nations decide to send in a multinational force to help patrol the waters in Somalia and rescue the hostages.

But there has been no such proposal as the moment, Ermita said.

On Tuesday, the International Seafarers Action Center in Manila called on the government to rally the international community for a more proactive stand against piracy in Somalia, including calls for a possible "expeditionary force."

But Ermita said that, in the meantime, the Philippines was content to let employment agencies and shipping firms conduct their own negotiations with pirates.

Also yesterday, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzalez said Malacañang is considering forcing seamen to Somalia and directly take part in rescue operations for Filipino and other foreign hostages.

"There should be a concerted international effort; it's affecting the world," Gonzalez said in a phone interview.

"We have no warships, but if there's a move, we can participate. The Philippines is very much affected by this. We have to send our troops there," Gonzalez said.

But Ermita said he was in no position to say whether we can commit any forces to be able to undertake rescue operations.

"At the moment, there are no plans or contemplated actions ... so wrong or (those) being done by other countries, such as what we read in the papers like (what) the French and US governments have done to rescue their citizens," he said.

With reports from TJ Burgonio, AFP

Wife's bus ride alarms East Timor leader

From page A1

"In Dili, the capital of East Timor, she doesn't want to go with drivers. She'd like to walk around alone.

"It's not really dangerous. Dili is a small city. Even though she walks privately and wants to enjoy, everyone knows where she is."

Araujo knew that his wife was coming to the Philippines on a private visit.

"But when I heard not that she had taken a bus, I was a little worried. I know that sometimes, in the Philippines, there are kidnappings and some bombings," he said.

Ramos, who speaks fluent Portuguese despite being away since his teenage years, also said her husband became angry upon learning that she and their son had taken a bus.

'La Sawa'

It was also a low-key arrival for Araujo, whose sons the gunner in "La Sawa" for Timorese, "someone who cannot be trampled on"). He was accompanied by another Timorese policeman who also serves as his photographer.

Dagupan Mayor Alipio Fernandez Jr. sent his sons to collect Araujo at the Naia on Monday night, using his private car.

Along with his wife and son, Araujo watched yesterday's Dagupan Cluster competition, a main feature of Dagupan's ongoing Bangus Festival.

He said they planned to go to the Hundred Islands in Alaminos City and also to Baguio City.

Asked how the Timorese viewed having a first lady who is not a native of East Timor, Araujo said: "Everyone respects and loves her, along with my family. She has many friends. She became a friend of my friends also."

He said he and his wife "really adopted to each other" because of not only a "similar culture" but also a "different background."

"My wife is an academician and I'm a political activist," he said.

Love story

The love story of Araujo and Ramos is good material for a telenovela.

They met in 1991 when she was an activist for Amnesty International and he a political activist serving a prison term for subversion in Indonesia.

"She came to visit as political prisoners in Cipinang, the biggest prison in Jakarta. The first time I saw her I was already charged with subversion and was sentenced to nine years," he said.

At the time they met, he had served a year-and-a-half of the sentence.

Araujo told Ramos: "You're a determined candidate and I'm a prisoner."

But it was clear that they were in love. "And I know that she was the one I wanted to marry. I cannot explain what I saw in her. It was love," he said.

Araujo said he belonged to a very poor family. "A lot of my relatives were killed, and I witnessed it when I was 16. It was one reason we fought for independence," he said.

When Araujo was released in 1998, he flew to San Francisco, California, and called Ramos to tell her he was already free.

They had a Catholic wedding in his village in East Timor in 2001, a year before that country won its vote on a referendum for its independence.

3rd visit

This is Araujo's third visit to Dagupan. He came here in 2000 after taking part in a conference at the Ateneo de Manila University.

In 2003, when he was vice minister for foreign affairs, he came to the Philippines on an official visit.

He also met Mayor Fernandez, then an interim condemnatory

EAST TIMOR leader Fernando de Araujo trains his camera on participants of a parade marking the opening of this year's Bangus Festival in Dagupan City. Araujo arrived here Tuesday on a private visit to join his wife and meet his in-laws in Dagupan City.

DAGUPAN City Mayor Alipio Fernandez Jr. (left) welcomes East Timor National Parliament President Fernando de Araujo and his wife, Jacquelina Rosario Ramos (center), on the city museum Wednesday.

'AGAINST POLICY'

Appointment of next AFP chief hit

By TJ Burgonio

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S appointment of Lt. Gen. Victor Ibrado as the next Armed Forces chief violates military policy because he has less than a year to go before retirement, retired Commodore Rex Robles said yesterday.

"This goes against the existing policy of the military which prohibits the reassignment of an officer one year before (he or she) retires," the military-trained said in a phone interview.

The character of the policy is to give an officer enough time to fulfill a favor to one of duty before retirement, said Robles, a member of the 1971 class Carumbalon that inquired into the July 2003 Oakwood mutiny.

After concluding its inquiry into the mutiny of disgruntled young officers, the Feliciano Commission recommended that Mr Arroyo stop appointing AFP chiefs with terms of less than a year.

Besides, the Philippine Army chief just been picked by Mr Arroyo to replace AFP Chief Gen. Alexander Yano when he retires on June 15. Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro announced Tuesday.

This means that Ibrado has only nine months. In order

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OPINION

'Wang-wang'

CALL HER JACKIE S. THE "INTERIM FIRST LADY" of East Timor, Jacqueline Aquino Kuprie, is a Filipino political scientist married to Fernando de Araujo, president of the new country's National Parliament. She was back in the Philippines recently, for what she called a private visit. It was not the determinedly private nature of her visit that caught the attention of the locusts; it was the resolutely modest way she went about it.

EDITORIAL

The best way to capture this contemplative modesty is to quote at some length the report written by business correspondent Gabriel Cardinoza. "After exchanging greetings [at the Manila airport] they [Jackie S. and her mother] took a cab and headed to a bus terminal in Pasay City where they boarded a bus bound for her native Dagupan. The Friday night trip took five hours. At the station, they hailed a tricycle and asked to be taken to their house in Barangay Bonuar-Gasset."

This isn't merely a charming anecdote: it is an indirect indictment of the way many public officials or political personalities in the Philippines conduct themselves, when traveling. It makes for a good story because it reminds us of the inestimable surprising quality of human nature. But it makes for a front-page story because it offers a measure to the "wang-wang" culture our political VIPs, both high and petty, relish for granted.

Mr. Siapno may not know the meaning of "wang-wang"—she has lived almost for most of her adult life, starting (meaning other distinctions) a Ph.D. from the University of California in Berkeley—but she should recognize the self-importance her old country's politicians attach to themselves. Wang-wang is the siren that "very important people" acquire, whether they rate unescorted in or pair of a motor, the sound is a sign that the usual (traffic) rules do not apply to VIPs. They are, obviously, too important.

Already, we can anticipate the objections, the clarifications, that officials who feel offended to will issue. Her visit, they would say, was a private affair. There is no comparison with their official travel.

Yes, but they would miss the point. Jackie S. could have used or borrowed a private vehicle. But she did not consider herself too good for an ordinary bus or—[ue barbarian!]—a rickety tricycle ride to muse about the dignity of public office than flashing lights and howling sirens ever can.

But East Timor is a small, impoverished country, where politicians or even hired spokesmen might stop. There is no comparison.

Again, they would miss the point. Substantial government resources are spent every year to provide public officials with the illusion that we are already a rich country. How many hundreds of soldiers, how many thousands of policemen, are assigned to public officials as personal security? How many vehicles must be deployed to keep a VIP and his security entourage from venue to venue? Does a vice mayor of a second-class municipality really need a close-to bodyguard? Does a congressman look in her district really need a motorcycle escort? Does a Cabinet secretary making the rounds in blitzy Manila really need two beige-tainted, sunglassed AUVs to shadow his gas-guzzling SUV?

You get the point. Or at least we ordinary citizens do. We are not asking our public officials to use public transportation to go to and from work—although that would amount to a moral revolution. We are only asking them to reconsider the sense of entitlement, the sense of inflated dignity they display because of their complicity in the wang-wang culture.

But for "interim first lady" of East Timor is not even an official, nor does she hold a permanent position, still other officials would say. There is no comparison.

They would, again, be missing the point. All public office is temporary. And too many of our own officeholders see their office to aggrandize not only themselves but their families. Who has not seen police bodyguards deployed to secure an official's child, or a convoy of government vehicles to accompany an official's spouse?

In her simplicity, in her rare sense of self, Jackie S. reminds us how spoiled, how self-indulgent, how corrupt many of our high-ruling officials have become.

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Fish menus

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

IN THE EASTER WEEK EXPOSURA, FEW voters that simple Oh needs trumpet significantly to the post-Reaction-less accounts. The unbridled question: "Didn't dare believe," Lake writes. "How are we going to eat?" asked the cancelled Sabbath. Like a ghoul, He appeared to their bowed dining room. "They gave Him a piece of broiled fish. He took and ate it before them."

But soon fishing communities today "are increasingly caught in a poverty trap," says the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Fishers, felt exploit, at ever increasing intensity, "a shrinking, fragile and unpredictable resource."

Catching or harvesting fish for one a vital part of people's lives, notes the FAO regional office study, "Status and Potentials of Fisheries and Aquaculture." Fish provides protein, especially for poor families unable to afford more costly other foods. Fish sauce (patis) appears on dinner tables from Bicolnon, Bangkok and Batac to Jakarta.

Filipino fishermen account for 5 percent of gross domestic product. That's thrice what Malaysia has taken from the sea. But it's only one of Cambodian (11.4 percent) catches. Timor-Leste's equivalent yields six right times more than ours.

Those yields don't seem real increase in production. But FAO cautions. They may reflect improvement in how data are compiled.

The info that fish alone "in food and nutritional security, especially of rural and coastal populations, is underestimated," the report states. "Asia and the Pacific are one of the heaviest fished areas in the world. Signs of overfishing are becoming more apparent ... Unsustainable practices are widespread."

The outlook shortened for the near 2 B.O. for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. "IUU fishing in Asia is widespread and problematic," the report says. Destructive methods employed range from dynamite to cyanide and unregulated gear.

Filipino and Taiwanese fishermen in the

IT WAS EARLY EVENING, AND THE STREET was desolate. Normally noisy as hustlers in taxpayers, cars, PUs, and even motorcycles pushed and shoved there, and in the hungry flocked to the restaurants, there were pushed in the middle of the road sharing an unending stream of honking. This time it was dark and quiet. Only a few vehicles were in sight. Reading its unnerving sign with a fiery white light, like the kind that suddenly springs to life to prime your urine cannon blast out an interrupted escape.

I don't know whether it was just the darkness and its air that made the light unusually bright as its owners peered either to see or not a spotlight to ward off evil spirits in the form of customers on rare legs wearing ski masks. Beyond its gate, everything was pale. Or dark. The street lights in every corner that Carmel night into that were out, running on borrowing and running. All the other businesses were closed, and only a few cars, including my hardening one, disturbed the silence of the streets. Everyone's gone to the movies, I thought, the song running through my brain like an audio on loop. It was as if the world had wound down, or was normalizing at a quieter pace.

This wasn't an obscure street in the Bicol, or Visayas, or the Visayas. The two West Avenue in the heart of Metro Manila. It was Good Friday, and this was the night I ate when I went out to watch some stir. It was a reasonable effort to get out of the house. Of course, then I'd find the—it's dark and depleted. I had gone out before on Good Friday evenings and found it to be so, but it is one thing to know something with the head, it is quite another to apprehend it (again) with your five senses. I was thunderstruck by the uncanny logic of Metro Manila.

Rare is our hardest, prone to the streets, they had gone out of town, which reminded me again that most Metro Manila residents today are not originally from Metro Manila, they are from somewhere else. And the question, "Which province are you from?" is not a staggering proposition. Even those who respond, "Born and raised in Metro Manila" normally add, "But my parents come from Baguio (or Cebu or Zamboanga)." Sometimes, there's previous little difference going to the streets and going out of town, but that's another story.

Which made my sole agent why everyone goes to the movies, or the provinces, during Holy Week. I guess it's usual, like Christmas or All Saints' Day which offer no occasion for a holiday season—and this particular Holy Week was a long one, a perfect excuse to go the whole hog. But if you were looking for peace and quiet, your best option was to stay home, or (if you) the perfect place to have had a vacation at last week was not Baler or Boracay. It was Metro Manila.

The peace and quiet were easy to see, or hear, or not hear. Where I live, I've gotten used to the sound of nothing things exploding through the night, courtesy of our fine) Days which has been caused into a whopping debt night before the eve of the homeowners' association. Then it made the blind see, others made the seeing blind. But the smoking of the drugs has become an addiction of sorts, and unlike other addictions, this one is not fatal (or if it is, it's not by choice). I had gone out before in advance to the suffering of Christ, the prisoners had apparently decided to begin the prisoners of flirting with heroine, even thoughthey could always have argued that losing due suffering recommended you and allowed empathy with the Redeemer.

The sudden pull of silence had an unexpected effect. That night, I had trouble drifting off to sleep. Some people have learned to count sheep; I have learned to count the interests lie. Are someone breaks up—or somehow does, or is it someone enters a wave to little completion or no resolution.

But that was for later. Before that, in early evening, I drove like Alfred Paulrock through half-deserted streets, the unnerving tension of restless nights, without being weighed by his sense of oppression over a suffering city, over a withering self. No one. (In all) look on a full-moon as in wrapping Metro Manila has no magic charms, not unlike the ones you find in other megalopolises of this world, small, or in all, their sprawl and welter, until, or in all their density and confusion. But if you've lived here for most of your life, like I have, the unnerving sights are likely to be but on you to the glare of overpolite. Me, in the blare of loud and lurid, the pleasures of the ravaged lives. Shades of these picture you on tonight like that when he city takes on an alien face, and you take a further glance at it.

I did catch a glimpse of Mark Joaquin's news site and despair at this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this—Metro Manila. In Joaquin's chronicle, unveiling proudly beside a meager, new dark home in the glow of distant light, in the heart of hopeless of a crowd gathered in an alliance hostilities while others dream on a street through a loudspeaker, in a court of the light standing at a complex in an old warning, an disagreements and proclaiming the rule officers of a chaotic supplemental, in foreigners strolling through lobby alleys and mixed children sleeping on the pavement, in priest and prostitute, as someone and Bothersome, in taxis and producers, in politicians and in buyers and hot traffic in Ayala and Pasong, in the streets and hawkers some.

What can I say? Sure and maybe can also make your mood tumble.

Or not.

The audit probably done by some of the country's top artists go on sale tonight at Greenhills from 6 PM p.m. to 9:30 p.m. The artists and models will be there. Art, said Picasso, is the lie by which we know the truth. Sure, say the painters, is the guise by which we know the soul.

Whatever. In there and get to glimpse in the enthusiasm everything. Be there and get to overheated truth.

Respite

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

Thaksin forces retreat for the moment

THE RED-CLOTHED PROTESTERS LOYAL TO DEposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra have pulled back from the streets of Bangkok in the face of the opposition's counter-assault of the Thai military, but the damage has been done. The vacillation of the dozen Samurais—several prominent members of the Democrat Party, along with a political novelist in this country of smiling people. Sanitsuda, which is Thailand's primary industry, and last summer will suffer from this.

More than damage seems to have settled down, the question on the minds of observers around the world was how large the Thai police had been in controlling the protesters. Many cannot forget how the red-shirted mob rushed into the hotel in the beach area of Pattaya where the Asean leaders were having lunch and forced them to flee by helicopter (authorities defy cut the helicopters) leaders by helicopter from the rooftop. The leader who didn't even reach the summit venue was Chulaon Premsiri. Miss Bulaon also would have allowed over $1 billion in overseas trade to be disrupted by protesters.

Equally shocking to viewers was how the mob tried to smash the bullet-proof car of Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva (I was not known whether he was inside the car, but it was shocking enough that his car was assaulted thus).

* * *

What people are asking is why bartenders were not set up by the police and the army to prevent the assault on the Pattaya hotel. The question is why the intelligence and the second-rate negotiators have played in local power structures, the question is, why weren't there any negotiators.

The general leaders allied with Thaksin said that while their followers were driven off the streets for the moment, the protests will resume at another time. "But there is not hard to believe, given the passion on both sides. It's ironic how fighting, that could be civil war have been averted and the key to public stability still lies with Thaksin. How far is he willing to push his country to further his political ambitions?

* * *

In our regular Sunday 4 p.m. radio program on

FLEMING/VILLA GLORIOUS SHOWBIZING [illegible] illustrated by Gisah Sison. 1. Boy, cry out, "Bull-boat!"

As the financial crisis creeps comfortably and mercilessly depression touches people's lives in the most personal ways, the subject of happiness is frequently studied by experts in psychology, economics, and sociological models. What does it really take to make our happy?

Daily last year, just before the economic crunch, both of economic at all, there was much talk about new research findings that challenged the long-held belief that Presidential cars happiness does not necessarily increase with income. That is, after a point of minimum has been achieved. The answer to seem to be found in a study by Professors at Harvard Business School of business showed "to their surprise [that] between wealth and "subjective well-being" found insignificant success.

They showed that the basic ideas income and happiness could not be mutually exclusive that they combined, namely: 1) Rich people are happier than poor people. 2) Richer countries are happier than poor countries. 3) In countries get richer they tend to be happier.

But of course I commented then, "Poor poverty make anyone happy! It does for those who choose and embrace evangelical poverty and give up material possessions in exchange for a life of neighbor to Bill Gibi is another story.

A Filipino professor responded to their columns above and sent me her own research findings that showed that the Easterlin theories still applied to Filipinos. We published her findings on the front page. I felt relieved that, yes, complacently upside-down, we are not unhappy people.

Since then, everyone Filipino seems have been flying home in droves because of factory that down abroad. Just last October, I tweeted 3 foreigners and Turkey to Bahrain that continued getting their wages in [illegible] Others have left [illegible] because some operations were moved to China. Last week I got word that it's going to close operations. That's something to be unhappy about.

I bring these up because recent Filipino psychic entrist, now based in New Zealand, has been doing

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cavanaugh

debt. Leslie Abrams and I deal with all kinds of topics under the sun. Sometimes it's the day's hottest issue with the former politics, but oftentimes we pick up some unknown but great project offering a noteworthy. Recently we had to meet Marne Ignacio Tiaga of Tiaga City, which Leslie described as the "Silver Star of BCR." Freddie Tiaga, who is in his 40s, has an economics and IT background and studied for four years in Metro Pacific Corp., which was developing Bay's identity in the 90s-1990s. It's interesting that one day he would head the municipality that, in his words, the Bases Conversion Development Authority was "crumbling" because it was blatantly poor citizens. After his 6-year BBL either Mayor Jesse Tiaga of the Supreme Court, but his municipality's perfect case in the regional and court, which the family felt was most unjust, the elder Tiaga asked Freddie to run for the post, and reasons he is serving his third term.

* * *

What concerns Tiaga is that there are five Tiagas. There is the Tiaga who was zealous of creative and office high-class, glittering malls and lavish schools and embassies established City and Mobility BBL either behind or in front.

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The final challenge for democracy icons

LETTERS

IN FEBRUARY THE TWO WERE FOREVER. Vice President Teofisto Guingona took to the streets, joining tandem with new youthful leaders in denouncing the excesses of the Arroyo regime. He saw the aging statesmen being hemmed down by the tanks deployed to protect Malacañang as he stood his ground, all alone but, shouting and writhing. It was an exercise in futility to be sure; but as he would go, it would be one minute in the epitome of unpolished patriotism against all odds.

Lately, we saw former Senate President Jovito Salonga come out of his cocoon and temper to the House of Representatives to applaud all the impeachment complaints against the Ombudsman for being out of the public's trust (which is merely one of the symptoms of a decadent regime), alas, it, too, was an exercise in futility as it is nothing by sycophants in that assembly who have the "numbers" in a bourgeois-run democracy, symbolic, though.

Both personal and responsible statesmen are in the twilight of their years. There are others like Ople, like Mr. Cory Aquino, who are still among us. Their days with us are numbered. World it not be a more heroic picture if they spent those remaining days making their presence more felt and seen among the crowds, demanding that the reasons expose clique up or skip out? The rule, albeit in schoolhouse, is: Mendiola could be the last and life-threatening for those in it was Ninoy Aquino's last trip back home.

It would be interesting to see how the post-term guards around the Palace would find the audacity and alacrity to turn down and pummel these once-heroic revered elders in submission—all in the service of the most unpopular regime this country has known. Let's see if they would have the guts to shoot gallons of pro-water at the defenseless former president, vice president and female president. Let the whole world see how happen and let the decent regime be damned for it in the eyes of the world.

Known for their intellectual courage and integrity, would not those unfolding scene of democracy want to go down fighting for what is right, rather than just fade away into the sunset? Or, go avoiding every day to an illness that has no cure anyway? What legacy would they want to leave their children and grandchildren? One of courage or helplessness and hopelessness?

—ESTELA U. TEOPISA, Esq.
teopisa@yahoo.com

PRESIDENT Arroyo on her way to meet former British Prime Minister Tony Blair in Bukay Pangeran, Malacañang Park last March 23.

Blair visit gave away RP elite's colonial mind-set

IT PAINS AND ANGERS US TO WITNESS THE LORDS of our government, academe, politics and business falling all over the discredited former British Prime Minister Tony Blair when he landed in Manila on a business visit. It was equally embarrassing, if it were not for humiliating, to see on the front-page pictures of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her aides running like flunkeys to keep an appointment with Blair in their home turf, Malacañang Palace. (8/3/09, 1/3/09)

It is tragic that our Malacañang confidants shamelessly think of courting the services of Blair in mediating the long-festering Muslim insurgency in Mindanao. They should know that in the Western world, Blair is a jest to be hated and scorned as his buddy, former US President George W. Bush, who launched the disastrous and unjustified war in Iraq.

In fact, Blair has been called the "poodle" of Bush (akin to Filipino) for his fawning support of Bush's foreign policies that wrecked America's and England's international reputation, especially among the Muslim countries. In fact, Blair joined Bush jointly in the unjustified invasion of Iraq by claiming that British intelligence had uncovered evidence that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, an allegation that has never been proven. And which has led to the death and dismembering of millions of Iraqis and thousands of American soldiers.

Yes, Blair was a highly successful politician in the United Kingdom, but to the end he was forced to resign from the premiership by his own Labor Party for his wrongheaded decision in the Iraq war, and by his failed economic policies. Both he and Bush are responsible for the current global financial crisis that has brought much of the world, including England and the United States, to the biggest recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s, and which is also threatening more economic woes in our own chronically fragile economy.

It is indicative of the colonial complex, pseudalism and servile mind-set of our ruling elite that, among contemporary English politicians, their idols are Blair and the Iron Lady Margaret Thatcher, who are among the most pathetic of global failures, disgraceful and presumptuous, which have steered the world down to the chaos of economic disaster.

It was said that the "fate" of globalization rests all ships. But the Philippine ship of state has been mired even since in the insidious doctrine of globalism, which acquiescence to the rack of globalization.

—MICHAEL L. ULMERIO
spokesman,
Movement for Truth in History (MOVIT),
mlulmerio@yahoo.com

Meralco pension funds jack up power bills

THE NEWS ITEM TITLED "MERALCO SALE to FLIT splits Lopez clan" (Business, 3/19/09) reports that the Lopezes committed to sell some 20 percent of their shares in Meralco to the group of Smart Communications on certain conditions. One of these conditions is the retention of Meralco's non-contributory pension fund. We see this as Meralco's way of keeping the loyalty of its officers and employees as it can continue to be burdened with gross rates and overwhelming investing.

The non-contributory pension fund for Meralco's rank-and-file employees and officers is part of the electricity rates Meralco customers are made to pay on a monthly basis. But study shows that pension funds are shared by the employees and employers. So we have quoted the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) to look into this—to protect consumers from this injustice. In 2007 alone, the funds had reached a staggering P2.7 billion.

The cost of this non-contributory pension fund is enabled to the electricity bills of Meralco customers and is one of the many reasons why Meralco's rates are among the highest, if not the highest, in the world.

We are not surprised at all why the Senate Commission on Public Services (SCPS) refused to grant the injunction sought by Meralco in the above circumstances. Mr. Dargilbert Tacorda that is the CEO of a plant conglomerate, for business discipline is no excuse that establishment interests to best served by giving high returns on their investments. And Meralco is just another company to please an investment because the return of investment and returns on investment are both guaranteed by the ERC.

Likewise, we are not surprised at all why the ERC allows this non-contributory pension funds of Meralco and those of other distribution utilities despite increasing demand for lower electricity rates. We will just leave this matter to one that this is part of their modality to ensure the stable operations of a utility. Included in this is the ERC-allowed monthly automatic adjustment by Meralco of its generation rate.

Our politicians and government officials have gone back to their own offenses, but for sure they will soon be behind making comments on the ensuing issue of high power rates. Even those who have not been heard to comment on the issue can be expected to express their sudden interest on the issue. Remember, election time is just around the corner and the National Electrification Administration (NEA) is for Batasan Ito. Dimo-cratic has an excellent memory of people who, in the past, have already made a stand against the high cost of power and those who conveniently chose to close one eye on the issue of electricity.

—PETE L. TEJADA, president, National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms Inc., (Nascore) 18 Ilaya Court Compound, Tandang, Paranaque City

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Across the NATION

Group claims Malampaya fund misuse

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—A NEWLY FORMED group monitoring the use of Palawan's share in revenue from the Malampaya gas extraction project in El Nido has asked Malacañang to stop the release of the funds, claiming these were being used for projects tainted with irregularities.

A P500-million runway project and other big-ticket projects with funding from Malampaya revenue are being undertaken in southern Palawan.

Throughout the entire province are hundreds of other projects with similar fund sources.

At least P2.6 billion in provincial funds were released by the national government last year to key political leaders, mostly allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo, for big and small projects.

For months, a group calling itself the Ordinary for Good Governance has been asking questions about the projects and documents are in place to ensure that officials will not be able to cash in to corrupt the funds for personal use," said engineer Benjamin Alan of the Advocacy for Good Governance.

THE PALAWENOS go proper, the goose that lays golden eggs for the national government and, according to an NGO, for officials of Palawan, too. PHOTOGRAPH BY

"We have the documents and while we have barely scratched the surface, the amounts involved are already of plunder proportions. We are shocked to realize that our officials in once-pristine Palawan are nothing devoted to clean-cut clothing," Alan said.

File cases

Affidavits on alleged irregularities in the projects were executed by Antonio Escoda, engineer and employee of the Provincial Engineering District of the Department of Public Works and Highways in Palawan; Rene T. Godoy, barangay chair of Sta. Monica in that city whose community was supposed to receive school buildings funded with Malampaya revenues; Bernardo Tagala, a contractor; and Ramiro Villano, a contractor and owner of R.V. Villano Construction.

The group focused on Malampaya funds that were spent in the southernmost part of the province and on projects that had been identified by Rep. Abraham Mitra, an ally of the Arroyos.

Asked to comment on the allegations, Mitra said he welcomed any legal action that would be filed against the concerned officials.

"They should file the case in court and go after those officials. I have no issue with that. They are just speculating why they are picking on (projects in) the south only when there are bigger projects in the north, like that airport in San Vicente that is also funded by Malampaya. Those issues in her recent political forefront," Mitra said. Rudyard de Asis, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Docs in Bicol RP-US mission to treat 1,000 villagers a day

LEGAZPI CITY—DOCTORS expect to treat 1,000 to 1,500 villagers a day under the humanitarian aspect of Philippine-US Civic exercises in Bicol, officials said.

The medical practitioners taking part in the mission started serving yesterday at Camp General Simeon A. Ola here.

Col. Romeo Apon of the Army's Civil Military Operations for the Bicol Brigade said the health workers of local government units (LGUs) here in Bicol as beneficiaries would determine the illnesses to be treated before, hand to facilitate the Medical Civic Action Program (Medcap).

Maj. Hilario Hufana, physician and administrative coordinator for the Medcap team leader, said the US government brought the medicines from local suppliers after carefully selecting them with the approval of the Bureau of Food and Drugs.

The medical mission will be held for two days in Albay town, and three days in Ligao town, both in this province.

Robert said 10 American and 10 Filipino doctors would be in the team.

Patients needing major surgery will be referred to big government hospitals, she said.

The RP-US Balikatan Humanitarian Exercises will be formally launched tomorrow, but engineering teams will be arriving earlier to start construction and rehabilitation.

Schools, roads

The engineers were expected to build or repair roads and school buildings, which would be turned over to local government units at the end of the Balikatan.

Mayor Joan Lizada of Guinobatan in Albay expressed appreciation for the humanitarian exercises.

"The first services need is from the spiraling cost of roads, especially in the mountains," said Jovel Orbida of Barangay Travesia, Guinobatan. Ray M. Elarcd, Inquirer Southern Luzon

GOOD WEATHER
Early stars may have spoiled tourism, but it has been good weather for those farmers in Benguet. [illegible]

Cop pleads for justice for slain sister

LUCENA CITY—A POLICEMAN is appealing for justice for his sister who was killed in Tayabas allegedly by a brother of the mayor of Guinayangan town in Quezon.

The suspect, Emerito Jalec, was freed on bail after a prosecutor downgraded the charge against him from murder to homicide.

PO3 Joe Tecio, who is assigned to the provincial police, said his sister's two children saw the killing and pointed at Jalec as the gunman.

Abegail Golez, 30, was shot in front of her home in Barangay Gallegue in Guinayangan and died on arrival at the hospital. She was the widow of Godofredo Golez, brother of Emerito and Guinayangan Mayor Edgardo Golez. Godofredo died in 2002.

Abegail's eldest child, a 9-year-old girl, told police she saw her uncle, Emerito, shoot her mother while she was carrying grass in front of their home.

But on March 12, Deputy Prosecutors, a provincial prosecutor, reduced the charge to homicide, saying he found no witnesses to the killing. "The element of surprise is absolutely lacking or wielding as the assault is from the front and there is no other attendant circumstance," he said.

Tecio said his family would appeal Buenaventura's decision to the Department of Justice.

"The situation could have worsened if not Emerito's desire to settle these between or had (the) Golezes had left behind. Tecio said. Abegail had also been claiming ownership of the land.

The police station of Guinayangan had also recorded several cases of harassment involving Emerito to force Abegail to leave town "and leave the land for himself," Tecio said.

Delfin F. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Mini hydro plants planned in Cordillera

By Delmar Cadiz
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BONTOC, MT. PROVINCE—EFFORTS TO build 13 village-based hydropower plants in this landlocked province may push the Cordillera to the forefront in the search for renewable sources of energy to cut its dependence on electricity from the Luzon grid.

The plants will have capacities ranging from 0.22 to 300 kilowatts (KW). Gov. Maximo Dalog told a recent joint meeting of the Regional Development Council (RDC) and the Regional Peace and Order Council here.

Topping the list of potential sites is the Bayyo Talubin River, which could generate 12 megawatts (MW), Dalog said. Its potential was confirmed in a feasibility study by Tokyo Electric Co. in Japan, he added.

"The entire province only needs 4 MW if the hydro is developed, together with the other 12 potential sites, then the province would even sell power to its neighboring provinces at reasonable rates," he said.

Studies made by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), provincial engineering office, Mt. Province State Polytechnic College and private groups validated the hydropower potentials of the 13 sites.

These are found in Sitio Lias, Barangay Alunguyan in Bontoc town (two sites—41 KW and 220 KW); Bontoc Ili in Bontoc (195 KW); Sitio Bura, Tambosoc in Bontoc (368 KW); Lonad in Sabangan (368 KW); Sitio Magsad, Tambosoc in Bontoc (98 KW); Mayin in Tadian (20.1 KW); Lamo in Bauko (56 KW); Ogo-og in Barlig (100 KW); Samoklat in Tadian (5.22 KW); Balidi in Natonin (140 KW); and Binanuwal in Natonin (94 KW).

The DOST said these with a potential capacity of 100 KW and above must be co-owned by the province to the Department of Energy and the agency itself for assistance.

However, provincial officials were told earlier that the assistance would come if the hydropower plants are off grid, or outside of Luzon's main power source and distribution system.

Under the rules on energy development, plants considered mini-hydropower (101 KW to 10 MW installed capacity), small plants (10.1-50 MW) and big plants (over 50.1 MW) are covered by the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Republic Act No. 9136). This means that their energy resource development should be private initiatives.

Provincial officials approved the development of the hydropower plants based on the interest and willingness of the tribal clans to adopt the technology.

Dalog also asked the RDC to help in requesting the national government, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Asian Development Bank to include the sites in the ADB's Integrated Natural Resources and Environment Management (Inrem) project.

The project aims to draw up a comprehensive network for investments in minor river basins and watersheds in the country.

Dalog said the development of the plants would help cushion the impact of the economic crisis as it would create job opportunities and foster progress in the provinces.

NEWSBRIEFS

■ NAGUILIAN, ISABELA

Bus catches fire

A METRO Manila-bound bus caught fire along the national highway in Barangay San Manuel here on Saturday, police said.

No one was hurt, but many of the passengers' belongings were burned.

Joseph Calimag, the bus driver, said the fire could have been caused by faulty electrical wiring. Oliver Plaza Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

■ CEBU CITY

Sea hare toxic

THE SUPREME Lord Pond and Dings (SSAS) or Central Visayas has warned against eating sea hare, a marine animal locally known as [illegible]

"Sea hares may contain saxitoxin. The eaten of the bodies of sea hares [illegible] City who ate sea hare. Four other people were brought to the hospital.

Some parts of the sea hare are toxic. Dr. Alan Peguila, BFAR assistant regional director. The toxic ink-like substance from its glands can cause drowsiness, he said.

"This is the puffer fish," he said. Jhonnie Magallanes, Inquirer Visayas

■ EVENTS

Coco industry confab

A "SUMMIT-cum-fair" setting new directions for the coconut industry and guaranteeing the rights and privileges of small farmers is expected to be drafted during a three-day consultative conference that opened yesterday in Cebu City.

The first Alliance of Concerned Planters and Processors' Associations, Inc. (Alliance) organized the meeting to assess the condition and prospects of the coconut industry on which some 3.24 million farmers depend for their livelihood, according to a press statement.

The draft law will be presented to President Macapagal-Arroyo for her endorsement to Congress, according to Nicolas Nieto Jr., president of "Alliance At Last" 500 concerned planters, farm workers, processors and leaders will attend the conference.

Yolanda Aguirre, executive director of the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines, will present a comprehensive picture of the industry.

Emilio Concepcion, former Philippine Coconut Authority administrator, will current projection of the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF). (CI) Mitty Gomez, will unveil the prospects ahead the global economic crisis.

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

John Jon Bandayrel
Korina Cheryl Florentin G. Sabrinianco

Family, pals seek justice for Peehjay

PHILIP VASQUEZ or Peehjay easily made friends with almost anyone, even to people in the slum areas with whom he would share food from the family table, his family and friends say.

On April 4, however, while Peehjay and his buddy were riding on his motorcycle, unknown men on another motorcycle shot him along E. Borgen Avenue in Cavite City at around 2 a.m. Although he was already wounded, the attackers still ran after him and fired at close range in front of a karaoke bar near a tricycle terminal.

Peehjay, who ran a mobile phone repair center in the city market, suffered five bullet wounds in the body and was declared dead on arrival at the hospital. He would have turned 29 a week later.

Dr. Teofilo Ibobjay was buried at the Heritage Gardens cemetery. In the days after, he came to terms with his death. "Perhaps the purpose of his death was to stop the killings [in Cavite City] and to warn the public of the dangers," he said.

Scared

"Many saw how he was killed," Mina said. He lamented, however, that no one would testify as people were scared.

"We want justice. If the relatives would come out we just want to let people know that we would not let it pass like that," he said.

According to witnesses, the killer was wearing a cap, a fatigue jacket, and a scarf to cover his face, and have a tattoo on the right arm, while his companion wears a helmet.

Four of Peehjay's friends, including his motorcycle companion, had been summoned separately from anonymous senders, saying, "We know where you are. You are on the cannon hills."

Relatives say the killer was hired by an influential man in Cavite City according to a source, the killer was known in Cavite as being hired by politicians for P10,000 per "hit."

"Like how is like those of chickens. They will kill day or night," the source said.

Minors every week, people, usually petty thieves, would be killed, until those are not being reported, the source said.

Two weeks before Peehjay's murder, a 19-year-old was shot and killed allegedly by a policeman because he stole a mango. Last year, two witnesses were killed by a gun-for-hire after giving their testimony.

"Without all his personalities here have their sons his sons," the source said.

Leads

Police are looking at four possible suspects in the killing and already have a lead, said Senior Insp. Rolando Pedrajas, PDG Armando Cinco of the Cavite City Criminal Investigation Division said. But he could not give names yet as this might affect the investigation.

He denied reports that a government official or a gun-for-hire group was behind Peehjay's killing.

"We still could not say if the suspect was hired. We are also not dismissing the possibility that the target was his companion," Cinco said.

Police records showed that the last unsolved murder case happened in August last year. A certain Bernardo Palabyab was killed by a lone gunman riding on a motorcycle over illegal drugs.

Since January, police recorded only 19 crimes, including one homicide.

"We are just ordinary people here. We want a peaceful life," Mina said. But after his son was killed, he said the family could not just keep silent. — With a report from Korina Cheryl Florentin G. Sabrinianco

Laguna's 'midwives of the soul'

THE HAVEN de Amor Hospice allots a space in its center in memory of its patients. — PHOTOS BY RAMON E. PEREZ

By Marivic Cinco
Los Baños, Laguna

MIDWIVES OF THE SOUL IS HOW HOSPICE volunteers describe themselves. While midwives assist women during childbirth, they, in reverse, aid persons to a peaceful end.

"It is a concept of giving comfort to the dying," said hospice pioneer Dr. Monina Silernales.

She believes that "when dying, there is so much pain—physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual. The hospice extends to all these."

In 1995, Fernán and Loreche Advincula, both professors at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), lost their 14-year-old daughter, Sarah, to cancer. Trying to assuage their grief, they attended a hospice seminar of Filipino oncologist Dr. Josefina Magno in Manila.

Magno, who was the pioneer of hospice care in Washington D.C. and Maryland, was then commissioned by the World Health Organization to bring the idea of palliative care to Third World countries.

The Adviances networked hospice care to colleagues and to church members of church groups in Los Baños the following year.

The Madre de Amor Hospice was founded and its first president was Antonio Mercado, Monina's husband.

Since then, the hospice has serviced about 300 dying persons in 18 years and is considering to expand its services.

It is the longest running community-based foundation with its center located in Los Baños Subdivision, formerly the Umali Subdivision, in Barangay Bagong Silang.

"The dying usually asks me to

HOSPICE volunteer Renato Gonzales, left, and Dr. Monina Dizon.

be left alone, to be forgiven, to reconcile differences with someone or children," Monina said.

Death, she added, comes with the "loss of the unknown and of the end of things."

The dying fears leaving loved ones behind.

"We do not promise cure to the patients, it is not in our hands," said Monina. The hospice, instead, offers companionship and friendship to the dying as well as to the family of the dying.

A dying person goes through the denial stage and the hospice helps him/her accept the fact.

"Death is not death. It is a passage to the next life," Monina said. As the body perishes, the soul remains. She said this is the "healing" the hospice would offer.

Monina remembered Emma, a hospice patient who had cancer of the uterus.

"She could not sleep. Her said she could hear children crying to her head and wanted to stop them," she said.

Emma was a known abortionist in the town for 10 years and only stopped when she was diagnosed of the illness.

The volunteers accompanied Emma to confession, but it did not stop the crying.

"We told her, you have to forgive yourself," Monina recalled.

However, the anguish continued. It only ended when Emma opened up about her adopted son Boyet.

Last suffering

According the Monina, there was a young student who wished to get an abortion. Emma refused as the student was already on her ninth month of pregnancy. She instead adopted the boy.

"It was her last suffering. She worried about what would take care of Boyet," Monina said.

Emma's sister promised to take care of the boy and thereby effect, Emma died in 1997.

As referred to by WHO and its nurses companion, hospice workers are often called volunteers.

"It is only here in Laguna that we are called midwifelets," Monina said. She said the term came from the volunteers' approach as "nanabihan ya dyosa [we are here to visit]."

Madre de Amor has about 50 volunteers operating in 17 towns of Laguna. They come in pairs when visiting "houses of patients usually at finge 3 or 4 times.

Most of the time, relatives, neighbors or doctors enroll a person in the hospice.

"It's not easy to see a dying person. Sometimes, the lessons are open and riveting. Most [patients] also take time before they open up," Monina said.

For she believed the volunteers were mature in age and experience. "They have a certain level of depth. They are brave because they carry their birth," she added.

A beginner volunteers undergoes a two-day training at the hospice.

The volunteers regularly meet each month to review and discuss the case of the patient they are handling and to consult with the hospice doctor regarding the patient's medical needs. The members quarterly spiritual recollections.

"A volunteer is never left alone. He has a support system," Monina said.

When the patient dies, the volunteer joins the wake and attends to the bereaved family.

For the whole year, the volunteer looks after the family by regularly calling and visiting them.

If a relative of the volunteer dies or the patient he was taking care of passes away, the volunteer is not allowed to do hospice work for a year to remove from bereavement. He, however, continues to attend activities at the hospice.

A volunteer gets by "through payment-load friendship" (he adores-ofer-bles, Monina added).

They receive no pay for the service, as the foundation survives through donations and drugs sourced from health organizations.

Passage

Teresita Gonzales, 68, was one of the hospice's pioneer volunteers. She joined the service believing "it was my back time."

Teresita earlier worked at the University of Missouri Medical Center, where patients were children with abdominal illnesses.

In 1986, she herself was diagnosed with breast cancer.

"They gave me six months [to live] and I am alive up to now," she said, saying her survival is medical doctors and to the "divine physicians."

She said her faith and the support of loved ones were a big factor in her recovery. "I felt first-hand how to have this kind of disease. It is a blessing to have the opportunity to reach and touch the dying," she said.

She remembered a hospice patient, Nicoline, who had a brain tumor. Heartbroken the girl died, Teresita talked to her about seeing images of God and angels.

"That is the stage called playing with the angels. Her eyes were stuck on the ceiling," she recalled.

Teresita lamented that the dying are often ignored in society today.

"What if death awaits us and we cannot complete unprepared? Every day, you enroll to make a difference in the lives of other people," she believed.

Hospice movement

Hospice care in the Philippines has not gained much support. Only recently, said Dr. Rhodora Ocampo, Madre de Amor medical and program director, is Asia, she said, Singapore has so far the most number of hospice centers.

"The need for hospice care could be relieved in the millions of people dying experienced of pain and suffering," Ocampo said.

Most hospice patterns in the Philippines suffer from breast and lung cancer.

Only 15 persons dies in the hospital, while 80 persons prefer to die in their homes, mostly without available caregivers.

Madre de Amor helped establish the National Hospice Palliative Care Council of the Philippines and in 2003, the umbrella organization Hospice Philippines that now has 20 member hospices.

It has also moved in the declaration of the National Hospice Week celebrated every 2nd week of October.

Mysteries of faith abound in Mt. Banahaw

By Marivic Cinco
Dolores, Quezon

FOR SOME PEOPLE, LEAVING THEIR COMfortable life to take the road to Mount Banahaw is God's "calling." A removal in the rayuic mountain, they say, is a product of their greatest challenges.

Benedicto remains a hero for people in search of spiritual cure. "Whether it's Catholic, Born Again or whatever group, these are just branches of only one true tree leads to Him," said Bernard Portible, 56.

Portible is a missionary of the Inspirational Gumpang Town, a "brotherhood" of San Cristobal, manufacture dresser founded in the 1980s. The other groups are the Tatlong Persona at Kinabuhayan, Reina Hispirina and the Hinahiran.

"You will not be saved by your group, but by your faith," Portible says.

Shrines

During the Lenten season, over a thousand devotees from Manila, Laguna, Batangas and Quezon Province to Banahaw as early as Superior de Dolores (Peñafrancia before Palm Sunday).

Many caves or stations have become shrines or delegations based on the local belief that these natural rock formations are sacred because of "supernatural" markings.

For instance, a shrine called Jesusalem's Land is child's footprint, believed to be that of the boy Jesus. In the "Pentecostkan" (Pentecostkan), an apparent open book resembling a Bible is found.

A footprint of Mary is said to be seen in the De la Paz Shrine, that of Jesus in the Kinabuhayan Shrine, and a Marian image in the cave setting of called Jesusalem called the Lang Awa (Mother of Mercy) shrine.

Popular destinations are the Dampuganan, Tres Marias and Labnilabnilang Ambi, and groups called the Santo Nombe, Sta. Lucia and Tatlong Kinang Tubig, which are all said to local people of Banahaw.

Markings

The belief in the markings, the devotees say, originated from the Kanlaonanan in the 1400s, who fled from the Spaniards in Bantayan and Intramuros. It took deeper roots during the Spanish era and the spread of Catholicism.

Similarly, amulets, locally called "hubad," such as medal, have are emblems of faith in Banahaw.

According to Portible, elders believe that the babad is "given by mouth" by bowing is under the room of elder ones, such as "kanitar" or "sotanday," in May.

Elders after prayers or it for one whole year before they dig up the medallion.

Bernard was a wealthy businessman in Baguio City before his vegetable delivery business flopped in 1994 and criminal charges of estafa were filed against him.

His adopted son also fell sick and his doctors could cure him.

"I lost hope. But I was told that whatever was taken away from me would come back double," he says.

Desperate, he joined different religious and he read about Banahaw. He decided to visit the place on one Holy Wednesday.

"One session called On Lucia is similar to my wife's name and beside it is San Bernardo, similar to mine," he relates his belief.

After the visit, a friend informed him by phone that their business was revived.

In 1997, Nobilo moved his family to Batulao where they put up a small sari-sari store. He founded the Kapatirán chapel where devotees hold their functions.

Nobilo remembers seeing a ray of bright horizontal light passing through a wooden cross while he was on a nine-day vigil to accept the ecumenism.

On another occasion, he saw bright lights in the sky changing into multiple colors.

His son, who was cured when they took him to Banahaw, would speak in different languages they could not understand.

Rhodora and aquaintance, Portible says, are hard to prove as "you usually experience them when you are alone. There are no witnesses."

"But I personally believe, you will see," he says.

For Portible, his faith is not restricted to the Kapatirán.

"I am still searching for the truth. Ang *babad* na ay si Jesus (The *babad* is my amulet)," he says, adding that the only sure time he has is "to do what is right, without expecting anything in return."

Divine government

Portible's transformation was nearly similar to those of other missionaries. One, who refused to identify himself, said his calling was to "discover Banahaw's mysteries."

He was a young boy then when he had a "prophetic dream" of the mountain and proved the exact site to be real only when he came there years later.

He says he had been dreaming of silhouettes in very bright light, which he believes is he God, and hearing voices telling him "someday you will live in Banahaw."

"It was a painful transition," he says of the collapse of his automotive business and his shift to mind life, forming and growing chickens for a living.

He began his "spiritual pereginations" in Banahaw in 1999.

"My life changed. I discovered before, I would not dare disobey Him again," he says.

Through 10 years of studying religious texts in Banahaw, he rediscovered the prophecy of the "divine government."

The prophecy—that the country's economy would crumble under the government of a female leader—was heard way back in the '70s, he says.

Moreover, he says, a war between Filipinos would ensue and following that would come the divine government.

"Huka ay labong na Asongan, *sabad ang gluang wainwat* na manawanan ay buong dangalig (An) magiging banggaanan ng lahat ng pamamayanpilipinas. Hyan the bandana dawd will rise a gold flag that covers all over the world and normally to believed," he recites the prophecy.

He says it alluded to the Apocalypse written in the Book of Revelations.

"It would begin here in the Philippines, here in Banahaw," he says. "Ta pyan *ang* Ayalna Nasarate, a dreamer of his ng time. "It is not written on paper. Pero andi sa langyan *ay* amanan."

He says the divine government "is the consciousness of the people with divine hearts. When the Ten Commandments are all only does not are have unity and let God live in our hearts."

Hoya: It's over

LOS ANGELES—OSCAR DE LA Hoya called it quits to the ring on Tuesday ending a career in which he won 10 world titles in six divisions and became American boxing's most popular fighter.

He announced his decision at an outdoor plaza across the street from Staples Center, where a statue of the 38-year-old nicknamed Golden Boy stands.

The cause for the conclusion that 38 ever," De La Hoya, from Jose Luis Sapphire, and three losses in his last seven fights. He has not defeated a formidable opponent since Fernando Vargas in 2002. Age and diminished skills led to losses in recent years to Felix Trinidad, Shane Mosley, Bernard Hopkins and Floyd Mayweather Jr.

He won his last title in May 2006, beating Ricardo Mayorga in six rounds for the WBC light middleweight belt. He finished with a record of 39-6 and 30 knockouts.

De La Hoya will stay involved in the sport as a promoter with his Golden Boy Promotions.

Pacquiao statement

"I am very happy for Oscar and his family," Pacquiao said in a statement. "I think he made the correct decision. Fighters of my generation owe him a great debt. I wish him nothing but the best."

Meanwhile, Benny Singleton will join Hopkins and Bobby Hutton in the ring when they tangle in May 21 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Hopkins, who has worked fights at both Pacquiao and Hatton, has been tapped by the Nevada State Athletic Commission to officiate the fight. NSAC executive director Keith Kizer told Inside Sports. Named judges were Michael Pernich, Glenn Trowbridge and C Ross. AP

Texters trip Realtors

KELLY Williams and the Realtors made a run in the second half, but Jarod Dillinger and the Texting Texters managed to hang on to the victory.

By Manny R. Castillo

FOR A COACH WHO JUST WON, CHOT REYES FOUND IT VERY hard to be happy.

It's one of those games where a win feels like a loss," the Blu-boosted Ateneo coach told reporters moments after Talk 'N Text nearly blew a 34-point lead before salvaging a 97-91 win over Barangay Ginebra in the Wendy's PBA Fiesta Cup eliminations at the Araneta Coliseum.

"I'm proud that we hung in there, but it's hard to be happy when you squander a 34-point lead," he said. "We can't seem to find the killer's instinct in our people sweep and that's a problem we have to address."

The Tropang Texters, the reigning Philippine Cup champs, led 59-25 with 2:02 left in the second and 81-59 at the start of the third, but needed big baskets from Mac Cardona and some missed shots from the Realtors to

FAMILY FORMATION
Liberato Calimoso
3 p.m.—Game for walkers
(7:30 a.m.—Run to Greenwoods Executive Golf)

the rematch at improve on 4-3.

Ms. Lucia, which came to within five points in the last four minutes, was a turn game-winning streak come to a halt and dropped to second place at 4-2 with Alle Bais or Mons at 5-3.

"There are times when we look good and times when we look absolutely horrible," Reyes said. "We have to find a balance in between. Hopefully, we will learn from this."

Parchesh defeated Roger Gay, 61-78, in the second game.

Meanwhile, the San Miguel Coca-Cola game scheduled for tomorrow in Dubai has been postponed for May 22 after the failure of promoters to secure the visas of the delegation.

In another development, Barangay Ginebra will have to recruit a former import pool, National Basketball Association veteran Ryan Humphreys, who was announced to be a free-to-over the 6-foot-8 bruiser limits.

Humphreys, who arrived yesterday morning, to take the place of Rod Brady, was 7/16th of an inch over the limit, and coach Joey Lichtenhein told airline yesterday that they will sign up whenever is available for their game against Talk 'N Text tomorrow.

Top scorers
Parchesh
Talk 'N Text

89—Wink 16, Jackson 15, Castro 11, Barangay 11, Pena 2, Dillinger 8, De Guzman 9, Cruz 4, Olivario 1, Alparas 0, Lao 0.

GIN. GIN. KI—Johnson 18, Yap 16, Pilipino 15, Aguilar 11, Ayaay 10, Mariano 8, Espino 7, Gonzales 4, Caram 2, Mendoza 0, Cruz 0.

Quarters 23-15, 41-28, 71-48, 87-91

Second Game

PEMBROOKE 89—Tiongco 22, Dyquiangco 20, Go 11, Gaston 9, Yap 8, Pedroza 8, Vergara 5, Millard 3, Gonzalez 0, Alvarez 0, Mamo 0.

RUNNER-UP 86—Santos 18, Bringas 15, Barrido 15, Bassi 10, Rodriguez 7, Quibuyen 6, Reyes 6, Cruz 0, Cruz 0, Arboleda 0, Villanueva 0, Manuel 0.

Quarters 22-21, 37-47, 69-67, 89-86

Titans eye No. 2

THE PRESSURE OF CONTINUing the Harbour Centre legacy in the PBL is not lost on Oracle Builders new coach Glenn Capacio.

Even after a 72-64 victory over title contender Lincoln Tuesday, Capacio acknowledged that the Titans still have a mountain to climb to duplicate the success of the Making Pace in the Harbour Centre playoffs were collectively known.

"I'm happy we won," Capacio, who coaches Far Eastern U in the UAAP said in Filipino. "But the pressure remains, so we have to work doubly hard."

The Titans, buttressed by one of the finest guards in the amateur ranks in Mark Barroca, shoot for their second win against the Cebu Energy Drink squad at 4 p.m. today in the 2009 PBL OC Fun Unity Cup at the San Juan gym.

Co-leader Wangenda Purewen, an 82.7% season over Phoenix in the league's first Tuesday collider with Lincoln in the first game at 2 p.m.

Cedelf P. Tejano

LILET Arago of Hope (left) beats Regina Ann Gonzaga of Colossae in second base.

Ex-Laker beefs up RP Champions League five

By Jinno Navarro

A FORMER LOS ANGELES LAKERS player will reinforce the national five as import for the Fiba-Asia Champions Cup.

Cj Giles, a 6-foot-11 center who played five games for the Lakers as a rookie last season, was tapped to boost the lineup of the Philippine national team in the Champions Cup scheduled in Jakarta, Indonesia, on May 12-20.

Executive director Sid Tulo of the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas said the 23-year-old Giles fits the team's need for a talented and mobile big man.

After averaging 2.7 points and 2.4 rebounds for the Lakers, Giles suited up for Toronto in the NBA Summer League but couldn't find a spot on the Raptors' bench.

Giles later joined the Sioux Falls in the D-League, the developmental league of the NBA, at the start of the year before United States-based scouts lured to the SBP picked him up.

Tulo said the seven-foot-tall Giles is an excellent rebounder and exceptional shotblocker with great size and strength, elements that could boost the RP team led by skippers Chris Tiu of Ateneo and FEU's Mark Barroca.

Threats and the survival of the toughest

THERE WAS NO OBJECTIONABLE SUGGESTION for me to change topics.

"My boss has an ulterior motive for you," the woman on the other line said.

This was last month or after I fired off a couple of uncharitable columns to the direction of a newly installed national sports official.

The columns had obviously caused some uneasiness.

Of course, the caller did not say how seriously her boss had been bothered by the commentaries.

She merely asked for my mailing address.

* * *

"Where can I send this envelope?" she asked.

I gave my home address.

"But if it's a reply or rebuttal," I added, "you can just e-mail it."

"No, sir. It's dumb and this is not a horse inside."

"Oh, word it..." I agreed, "but make sure you put there where I can have it notarized."

End of conversation.

* * *

Well, as expected, no mail came.

I was also spared the time of making a trip to the post office, or looking for a

BARE EYE
Recall
Trinidad

* * *

OK, I can't expect those golden glories to move me ironically.

But time's to not to look for if they really wanted to get me.

The only I walk the open road, a happy one, or the blankslurping blanket, from my riverside place in Mayapas, every morning.

Sorry I told Butch, the saintly type, but not even the senior police force, which can't implement basic street ordinances, can be of help.

Those I had previously mentioned in my columns could also go to sleep.

But all threats notwithstanding, there'll be no dressing from the park with a beau.

* * *

The last three were not empty threats tempered between Manny Pacquiao and Ricky Hatton as the second was for their May 2 duel in Las Vegas soon to be fulfilled.

No reason to doubt that these two great warriors will be true to their words, too.

They will show up for number at their favorite beat.

There's the promise of sweet revenges in the form being served as a salad but for Ilgin at this year.

The expected five bouts challenges from Ruben Bantolino and the form from Phoenix, who boosted through punishing pitches in his wee outings—against David Diaz and Oscar De La Hoya—first year.

Legendary sharpeners and pounding power backed by a yearly impressive record, give Pacquiao a big edge in respectability.

But chances, known to be a pounding-grab brawler, could make it a long night for Pacquiao if the English Billionaire involves early punishment and pressure Pacquiao against the ropes.

Bantolino was the ropes could really save the junior welterweight champ from a stellar survival of the toughest.

Illam batters unscathed

By Cedelf P. Tejano

INTERNATIONAL LITTLE LEAGUER ASSOCIATION officials stayed unscathed as all four divisions in baseball yesterday were as Bacolod-West recorded a victory of clinching the Mid-South berth in Senior League softball in the 2009 Philippine Qualifiers.

The Illam All-Stars closed in on the top spot in group D of Little League baseball by shutting out Manila, 13-0, for victory No. 3 of the Luzon Pool.

The defending champion Illam squad in the Junior League also secured its third win in the sequence of Manila, 13-6, over an Ilam Ilocano League team, harnessed by players who keyed the country's second-place finish to the 2007 World Series in Taylor, Michigan, crushed Manila, 7-0.

Illam also blanked Cumaribas Norte, 11-0, in the Big League encounter at the Ward Memorial baseball field.

Starcher pitcher Neville Benjamin only worked for two innings as Pacumbal West summoned to first turn with a 25-8 whipping of Makati for a fourth straight victory at the Rizal Memorial oval.

The Ilam girls, who bowed to Bacolod-West, 1-13, on opening day, inched closer to a rematch with the Bacolenos as they cruised two 10-2 victory over Makati.

Nestea Beach volley Cebu leg gets going today

By Ronina S. Asorio

MANDAUE CITY—DEFENDING NATIONAL champions Pamantasan University and host-city winner Southwestern University remain the overwhelming favorites despite pounding new players in the Nestea Hi Reach Volley Shotgun leg which starts today at the Plaza area of the newly opened Parkmall here.

Sweepers-based Foundation, the 2008 and 2009 men's champion and runner-up to the University of the Southeast Philippines Foundation in last year's leg held in Bacolod City will have veteran Aniel Amador and score player in Bonifacio Ingcoy.

Warriors's champion Southwestern's elite association Sid Ilagan as rookie pair Dunka Rhonda Gondrezil and Lyn May Layno.

The All-Visayas finals in Boracay last year saw Southwestern's Amadeo and Rolando Agas beating USPF's James Ryan Rivera and Jeremy Basing, 21-15, 14-21, 15-9, while SWU's Jonelle Tubio and Marianne Gutierrez defeated University of Visayas' Jessa Rose Igot and Annabelle Wella, 18-21, 21-19, 15-13.

Hungria has won four times in the men's division and five times in the circuit's title of the last 12 Nestea Beach Volleyball tournaments.

Rocker Gould's header lifts RP past Bhutan

By Cedelf P. Tejano

FILIPINO-BRITISH STRIKER CHAD GOULD took a break from a fledgling music career and donned his colours of making the England bench soccer squad when he decided to join the Philippine team in the AFC Challenge Cup.

But the decision started getting in doubt last week Tuesday night as Gould scored the only goal in the RP heroes' scrambling 1-0 victory over Bhutan on the first day of the group B qualifying tournament at the National Stadium in Middleton.

Gould, 26, whose accents and hand fled-grew inked a recording contract in England recently, headed home an inch-perfect cross from fellow Filipino-British winger James Younghusband in the 33th minute for his 10th international goal since 2005.

"I want it to be clear that my priority is to help the Philippine win," Gould, who was also picked to the training pool of England beach soccer team, told the Inquirer via e-mail.

"The coach in England said that I will miss out on training time will hinder my chances of making the squad but in my mind, it's other to playing for the Philippines."

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Celtics nip Sixers behind Pierce

PHILADELPHIA—PAUL PIERCE HIT THE WINNING JUMPER, SCORED 31 points as the Boston Celtics topped the Sixers, 103-101, Tuesday.

Kevin Garnett missed the game for Boston's—and his—second knee and Ray Allen served a one-game suspension, in other games, it was Hawks 87, Miami 79 and LA Lakers 124, Utah 112.

Martinez unfazed by Donaire, says it's going to be a 'war'

By Marc Anthony Reyes

UNDEFEATED CHALLENGER RAUL "The Cobra" Martinez yesterday told the public to prepare for war when he trains to dethrone reigning IBF-IBO champion Nonito "The Filipino Flash" Donaire this Saturday at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Mexican debutante, who won his last fight with a spectacular first-round knockout, said he's got a lot of confidence going into the title fight despite admitting the odds are stacked against him.

"It's a big risk on my part coming to the champion's own country," said the 27-year-old Martinez (24-4-0) during yesterday's press conference at the Manila Hotel co-hosted by Solar Sports and Top Rank promotions.

"But I paid my dues and fought with fighters that gave me everything I needed to learn to fight somebody like Donaire," he said.

Martinez got away Vince Dosa in the first round with his deadly left hook to win the IBA super flyweight crown last November.

Donaire owns a victory over Hirofumi while both were amateurs during the 2000 United States Olympic trials but Martinez said he was just a newcomer then and that he is in his prime now.

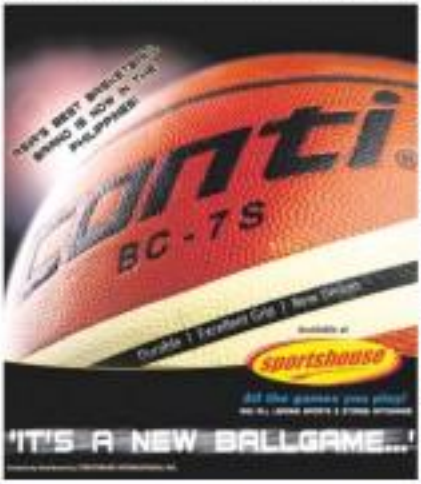
"That's the past," said Martinez. "Da buddy, whenever comporte that punch will echo."

Also fighting in the card dubbed as "The Flash and the Furious" are Brian Viloria and IBF light flyweight champion Ulises Solis, who has won his last three fights against Filipinos.

"I'm not the one who ruined the name Filipino knockouts but I find a good offering of fights against Filipino fighters," said Solis (28-1-2).

But Viloria remains confident of a victory.

"The past years have taught me a lot of things," said the 29-year-old Viloria. "But I believe that I'm a bigger, sharper fighter now."



Reynante takes lead

Unheralded Guevarra rules 3rd stage

By Jane Mariano

MARIKINA CITY—LLOYD LUCIEN Reynante grabbed the yellow jersey after the combative-natured third stage of the Liga-Ligo-UPM Tour of Luzon won by unheralded Mark Guevarra yesterday.

The son of 1977 Tour of Luzon champion Manuel Reynante wrapped up the seventh over second-ha winner Reynaldo Ramos after finishing in the top 10 for the third straight day.

"Winning the yellow jersey after three days was part of the plan we took the crown," said the team captain of Amerten Wral in Filipinas, who now has a total clocking of 11 hours, 37 minutes and 32 seconds.

Guevarra, the sixth man of the 7-Eleven Road Bike squad, also grabbed a piece of the limelight by taking the third stage from Tuesday's City which was forced to stop due to a traffic scare in San Pablo City and led to a restart after a 20-minute lull.

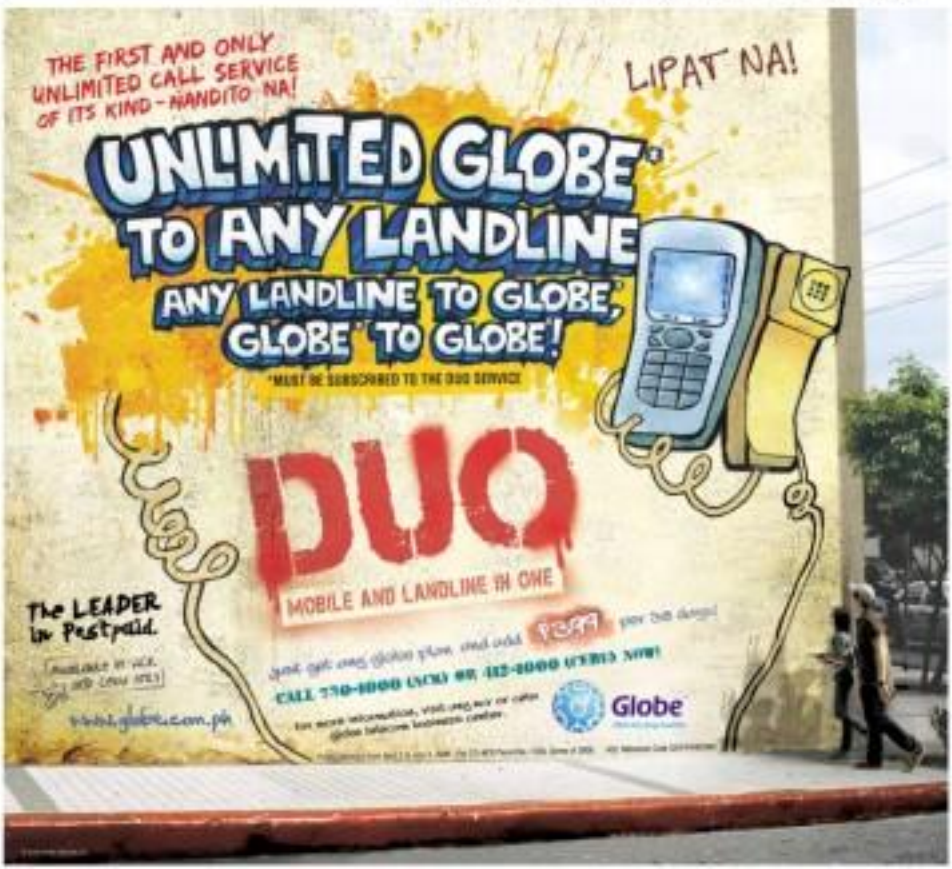
Benito Lopez Jr., son of another Tour veteran, salvaged second place for the day after failing to keep pace with Guevarra, who soloed it home to the Marikina Sports Complex in 4:04:12.

Lopez of Batang Tagaytay was second in 4:05:01 before Reynante, Dante Cagar of 7-Eleven Road Bike, Quigaye's Moses Nasagdig and Veterans Chronicle of Nicolas Bagunas arrived one minute and 11 seconds behind the Burlington stage winner.

Team manager Rogelio Rivas said they were forced to restart the race on Batangas' San Ignacio in San Pablo City for several cyclists lost their way as a result of the traffic jam.

"Lahat devotes of becoming a champion in the Tour but the team should come first," said the 23-year-old Guevarra from Bagong Silang, Caloocan, in Filipino.

Completing the top 10 in the overall are were Batang Tagaytay's Hilton Mangubat (11:01 behind), Marciano (12:05), OPT Low's Joel Calderon (11:57), Sante Barnachea of Mobile Pinadesi (11:03) and Orion Bandolar of Gen.Santos/The Rosaces (4:10).



Aplus METRO
Editor Ricardo S. Ulanday

DID YOU KNOW

LOCATED on Pinagkaisahan Street in San Juan is the monument "Spirit of Pinaglabanan" which was created by sculptor Edgardo Castrillo to portray the heroism of Balintawak who attacked a Spanish gunpowder depot in the area on Aug. 30, 1896. The revolutionaries suffered casualties but were victorious as the Battle of Pinaglabanan.

Cyril J. Bautista Inquirer Research

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PNP to charge negligent policemen

A GIRL cries as a demolition team starts tearing down her home in Las Piñas City. Seven people were injured when residents broke away from riot police during the demolition drive. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

7 hurt as illegal settlers throw stones at demolition team

By Allison W. Lopez

AT LEAST SEVEN PEOPLE, including a pregnant woman and a news photographer, were injured after they were hit by stones during the demolition of homes in Barangay Talon 2 in Las Piñas City yesterday.

Most of those hurt were residents in the area. They were identified as Gina Fabian, whom the police said was seven months pregnant; two girls, a 15-year-old boy; Alyssa Tiu-Ador, a photographer of the European Press Agency; and Ruben Dalgan and Alexis Soto Quilca, members of the demolition team.

Senior Supt. Reynaldo Gilbes Esquivel, Las Piñas police chief, said they arrested three minors by throwing rocks at the demolition team. The three were later turned over to the social welfare department.

Dalgan said the stone-throwing incident took place at around 10 a.m. when the demolition team started tearing down houses on the 7,000-sq m lot owned by a woman identified only as Mrs. De la Cruz in Townville Subdivision, Pulang Lupa 2.

Although the team was accompanied by 50 policemen armed with truncheons and shields, they were forced to seek cover when residents in the area started throwing rocks at them.

"Nakibahagi na rin sila. Nagpa-alam siya ng mga dalaga ko. Ayaw nga ipag-away. Tapos nung nakita ko, tumama sa mukha ko," Dalgan said.

Dalgan said he was about to take pictures of the incident when he was hit by a stone on the face.

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Atienza leaves fate of landfill case to courts

By Alexis Pape

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY Lito Atienza has left the fate of the San Mateo landfill to the courts.

Backtracking from an earlier commitment to revoke the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) of the project if it was found that the proponent, the San Mateo Sanitary Landfill Development Corporation (SMSLDC), "misrepresented" the location of the landfill, Atienza said he is taking his hands off the issue since a case has already been filed in court.

Atienza told reporters that since the issue has already been elevated to a San Mateo court, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) would have no choice but to presume the "correctness" of the landfill project.

"Before I did not know there were cases already filed in court about this project, which in fact turned some DENR officials, including myself, as respondents. I did not still have time to go to the court decide. As far the DENR, the presumption of correctness of the project would have to be pursued," Atienza told reporters.

Earlier, Atienza promised to revoke the project's ECC if it were proven that the project is not in Barangay Hinulugang Habagat, as stipulated in the project's ECC, but near a protected forest area in Barangay Maly and Guinayang, as claimed by environment groups and residents in the area.

Atienza also said he has consulted an investigation into the matter by the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau.

"Unless the court decides on the presumption of correctness then we have to follow the rule. I am duty bound to also suffer consequences in relation to this matter because I signed the ECC," he also said.

Last March 26, Clemente Bautista, of the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment (Kalikasan PNE); Tony Bulalo, of the Coalition for Garbage Free San Mateo; and other representatives of the stakeholders submitted documents to prove the actual location of the landfill to DENR Secretor Jobert Iroulo.

The documents included a zoning map that showed the landfill was built in Barangays Maly and Guinayang, and not in the location stated in the ECC, in Barangay Pintong Bukawe.

The documents also include certifications from the Land Registration Authority, Municipality of San Mateo's Office of the Deputy Provincial and Municipal Assessor, DENR-Region 4-A (CALABARZON), and Department of Agrarian Reform in Region 4-A, which all indicate the location of the new landfill in Barangays Maly and Guinayang.

Atienza said the documents were never presented to them at the time the ECC was issued on Nov. 24, 2008.

Atienza is referring to the case filed by Filinvest Land Inc., which initially sought a temporary restraining order (TRO) against the project. This case is currently being heard before the chambers of Judge Manuel Tiano of San Mateo RTC Branch 73.

SALVAGING VICTIM
Residence of Shirle Bagsit...Tiga ng. Rodriguez cares in Rizal look as a covered corpse of a man believed to be a victim of salvaging, as coroners say execution. The victim was found Wednesday morning shot several times on the head and body and his face wrapped in packaging tape. Investigators also found eight empty shells of .45 cal on the scene.

Cuerpo: I'll stay holed up

By DJ Yap

SUSPENDED RODRIGUEZ TOWN MAYOR Pedro Cuerpo said Wednesday he would remain holed up inside his office even as the Sandiganbayan is set to hear today his second motion for reconsideration questioning the court's decision to suspend him.

Cuerpo said he is still acting in his usual capacity as the mayor of the town and continues to sign documents that the mayor is supposed to sign, including "purchase orders, purchase requests and vouchers."

The suspended mayor said he would remain in his office until the Sandiganbayan or any other court issues an order stating that his suspension is not yet final and executory.

Acting Mayor Annie Cruz, on the other hand, has insisted he is the mayor even as the Supreme Court "tentatively" ruled to zone in a meeting he called Tuesday to explain the situation.

"I don't see how an acting mayor can claim to be the mayor when the department heads do not obey him," Cuerpo said.

On Monday, the OSG served the 90-day suspension order on Cuerpo and three other officials facing charges of grave abuse of authority and gross misconduct for the distribution of houses on a piece of land in Barangay Burgos in 2001.

Also ordered suspended from their current public positions were Rodriguez municipal engineer Fernando Ruiz; Salvador Bandalan, a barangay chair; and Renato Fresnoza, a police officer who Cuerpo said was killed in an ambush in 2004.

This is the second time that Cuerpo has been ordered suspended. In March 2008, he was suspended by the Read provincial board for raising the levies and rates on landfills being operated by his governments. The suspension order was lifted by the Palace after he filed an appeal at the Office of the President.

MetroBriefs

Antiflooding operations

THE MALABON City government has intensified its dredging operations at the Malabon-Tenejas River as part of efforts to reduce flooding in several barangays in populous Brgy. 74 this coming rainy season. In a statement, Mayor Tito Sona said the city government has already borrowed additional heavy equipment from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority. He added that the clearing of the nearly 10km Malabon-Tenejas River was expected to ease the incidence of flooding in Barangays Longos and Tañong.
Beverly T. Kalaw-Lat

Incentives for heritage sites

A SUCTION City councilor has proposed the granting of incentives to owners of historical and heritage sites to encourage preservation efforts. "To be able to preserve our historical and heritage sites, certain policies must be crafted in order to identify these and provide incentives to the owners for their preservation and restoration," Councilor Ma. Donella Jimlo said. She identified the landmarks as houses, buildings and structures—whether religious or civil—which trace the history, culture and heritage of Quezon City.
Julie M. Jimlo

Elections of UPAA Board set

THE ELECTION for the new set of officers of the University of the Philippines Alumni Association Inc. (UPAA) has been set April 6 to May 30, 2009. The new Board of Directors—23 members in all—will start UPAA for the term 2009 to 2012. Every member of the UPAA in good standing may vote through mail-in ballot or by voting. Submission of ballots should be in person or by mail beginning April 6 and not later than June 3. Mailed ballots should be postmarked May 25. Canvassing of votes is on June 4. For more details, please contact the UPAA Secretariat at 928-0906, 920-5851, 920-4870, or e-mail upalum@yahoo.com.ph, up.alum@yahoo.com, or upalum@upalumni.net.

4 men convicted for man's slay

By Erika Sauler

FOUR MEN, THREE OF WHOM remain at large, were convicted yesterday for killing a man in Tondo, Manila, more than four years ago.

Raymund Dalupan and his three cousins were sentenced to reclusion perpetua or 40 years in prison by Judge Zenaida Espina of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 19 for the murder of Ivan Ignacio Rivas Jnr. on Dec. 16, 2005.

In a seven-page decision, the court also ordered Dalupan to pay P50,000 in moral damages to the heirs of the victim. It also ordered the issuance of warrants of arrest for Geraldo Quibral, Norberto Estanislo and Jessie Obispo who remain at large.

The court based its decision on the testimony of two witnesses, Roger Lopez and Aaron Tolentino, who testified for the prosecution.

Both positively identified Dupanod as the one who positioned a gun at Rivas as Quibral shot the victim, killing him instantly.

Tolentino also testified that Dupanod fired his gun as he and his cohorts left the scene of the shooting, which the court said was obviously aimed at deterring people from following them.

For his part, Raymund denied the accusations against him and said that he was not involved in the shooting incident.

The court, however, said that even though his participation in the incident was limited to pointing a gun at Lopez, Raymund's action was necessary to the commission of the crime.

Court records showed the victim was shot after a heated argument with Estanislo.

San Lorenzo barangay chair suspended

Front page, A1

court for the said competing and alternative," they added.

The city council said the purchase of lampposts were "definitely excessive and highly irregular" because footlights were on with the installation—buying 1,207 lamp posts —even though the barangay did not need that many lamp posts.

As for the contractor hired, the councilors said the deals were Assumpcion College would not benefit commission because public utility vehicles are not allowed inside San Lorenzo Village.

The city council noted that even though the check issued to OSAF was encashed, footlights acted on his own and "without appropriation from the barangay council."

METRO
Citizen's Call
Our City of Affections and Disaffections is made up of stories.
Your stories. Tell us all about it.

- Did a signage make your day?
- Garbage dumped on your street sickens your day?
- Seen dugnagan thrown on the street where you live?
- Are you up in arms against the demolition of an ancestral house?
- Fazed by a basic concrete barangay project with a big positive impact to your community?
- Not stuck in gridlock?
- Fed up with cussing and feuding neighbors?
- Is there an everyday non-issue in your neighborhood?
- Delightful/dreadful facts on your way to work?

JUST TEXT
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P.S.

GMA should see the signs

ON TARGET
Kawsay Dyd

A PRESIDENTIAL SELECTIVE studied to the mnemonics of Digong.

A few days later, the Asean and Asian Union Leaders' Summit was cancelled after confusion broke out in Thailand forcing the participants, including President Macapagal-Arroyo, to be evacuated from the summit site.

Doesn't GMA see the signs?

Before the signs overtake her, she should resign and hand power over to Vice President Noli de Castro.

It's only a year and one month before the 2010 presidential elections and she's now a lameduck president anyway, so why not quit while she's still ahead?

* * *

A few weeks after then President Estrada became a non-Malacañang president, a chandelier came crashing down to the floor a few meters from where he was entertaining friends.

The superstition: Sign didn't put any meaning to the incident. The rest is now history.

* * *

Sometimes, the Universe sends signs so as to forewarn us about occurrences in the future.

Those signs are called omens.

Omens could be in the form of a dream such as a person crying to herself a death in the family, or an incident like the chandelier falling to the floor near Erap for whom the warning was intended.

We don't have to be superstitious to read omens. All we have to do is to become sensitive to the language of the Universe.

* * *

Dante Tan, a crony of deposed President Erap whom critics tried for insider trading, has been ordered by the Court of Appeals, now close to the verdict.

Before he left the country, he told me most of the SW stocks were owned by Erap, his family and close friends.

Tan said he was a virtual dummy.

* * *

I am not ashamed to say I was one of the winners in the SW stock manipulation.

I didn't know—and still don't know—how to play in the stock market.

The SW stock trading was my first and last.

A police reporter for the greater part of my journalism career, I don't know why stocks go up or down.

Since I was a friend of Dante Tan's, I trusted him enough to invest my savings in the SW Resources Corp. in 1995.

He said the SW stocks would go up. And they did.

It was Tan who also told me to withdraw my money just in time.

* * *

Now, back to Erap and the SW stocks.

After the fall of Erap, Dante and I met regularly for drinks. Mostly, I picked up the tab in gratitude for my winnings.

It was in one of those drinking sessions that Dante told me that Erap, his family and friends owned the biggest portion of the SW Resources Inc.

* * *

Erap won't be vindictive only DMA... Jeradline.

Joseph Ejercito Estrada, a.k.a. Erap, has many shortcomings in life.

But being vindictive is not one of them.

He has now reconciled with most of the people responsible for his ouster, including former House Ins Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

From what I've heard about the man, Erap is one who doesn't hold any grudge.

Ka-Angkan Festival

"Pamilya ay sama-sama sa bayan ni Bayani"

Rich in history, teeming with Filipino values

The Ka-Angkan Festival is an annual festivity in Marikina City. It coincides with the founding anniversary celebration of Marikina on April 16.

Initiated in 1998 by then-Marikina Mayor Jose Antonio of the Metro Manila Development Authority Bayani Fernando, the Ka-Angkan Festival is virtually a family reunion of Marikeños from all over the country as well as those based overseas. It is an opportunity for the present generation to get to know their ancestors and acquaint themselves with fellow clan members. Each angkan likewise embodies Filipino values which clan members hold in high regard.

Ka-Angkan reflects the age-old tradition of identifying a person or clan by another name by which it is also known, which is typically a unique family trait, distinct physical feature or idiosyncrasy, occupation, skill, or trade, or a serendipitous event; an angkan's name may also be derived from its political lineage.

To qualify in the Ka-Angkan, a clan must have an ascendant family member who is a native of Marikina or must be born in areas that used to be part of Marikina such as Kiwa na Ligas in Diliman, Quezon City. The angkan must also be at least 100 years old.

This year, more than 40 clans consisting of over 8,000 members will take part in the annual event which runs on April 13-18.

The clans are: Ibanez-Habad, Bernardo, Carlos, De Dios, De Guzman, Fernando, Feliz, Fajardo, Javier, Jacinto-Kandili, Lobrias, Magbalateo, Magdiluyo, Manalili, Reyes-Umbrano, Reyes-Pelayo, Santiago, Santos-Kuang, Santos-Abay, Tolentino, Ubing-Magtalong, Tiburcio, Bernardino, Dionisio, Fernando, Maya, Teodoro, Nepomuceno, Pelting-Ishii, Tabo, Salvador, Kampitan, Ramos-Nepomuceno, Reyes-Andrino (Aguinaldo), Amplayo, Bukaya, Parentela (Nepomuceno), Ide, Andres, Ayuson, Sharks, Dela Paz-Santos, Enriquez, Patiunco, Alvarez Sojuela, Torres-Habad, Torres-Paz, and Narvasa.

The Fernandos: Realizing a vision

The saga of Marikina's transformation started with a simple vision, for an industry and government friendly, happy working class community. Marikina was solely proclaimed as a home of the working class under the helm of then Mayor Bayani Fernando.

The simplicity of the vision though only saved from physical reconstruction, social reconstruction, and moral reformation. A "city in spiritual", coupled with effective and results-oriented governance, changed the face of Marikina along these dimensions. From a neglected, backward and forlorn city, to its close neighbor, Marikina transformed into a highly urbanized city in 1996. Marikina virtually evolved into an executive community, catapulting itself among the ranks of model cities in the Philippines.

Consistent with the elements of a city ready to take a new leap, Marikina adopted a fresh vision, "Be a Little Singapore," when Mayor Ma. Lourdes Fernando assumed office in 2001. Her agenda to make a "home" out of the houses for condemnation had both Marikina's pace of development further accelerated and more strength. It blossomed into a city rich with great potential and opportunity.

While as a means of balancing both interests have nearly realized, Marikina has not let up on its drive toward greater accomplishments. In fact, it has set its sights on the Ultimate Dream to become the "Model City in Competitiveness in Southeast Asia" in 2015.

Marikina through the years

The Augustinians were the first to arrive at the Marikina Valley in 1580, at the spot known as "Chorillo" in Barangka. Next came the Jesuits in 1630, in a place now called Jesus dela Pena (Jesus of the Rocks). Here, the Jesuit established a mission and built a chapel.

In 1697, the pueblo became a parish known as Mariquina. In 1901, with the coming of the Americans, its name officially became Marikina. The early settlers lived along the riverbanks and nearby fertile farms. With the industry of the natives, combined with the know-how of the early Chinese settlers, the farms began to produce rice and vegetables in great quantities until the valley became part of the country's most prized hacienda.

By the 19th century, Hacienda Marikina was owned and administered by the Tuason family and had become the biggest in the Philippines. Fat to say, natural beauty, and plentiful harvest, the hacienda was declared a municipio (royal estate) by the Spanish colonial government. At one time, the estate was administered by a beautiful native lass, Doña Teresa dela Paz, who was married to a scion of the Tuason family.

By the turn of the 20th century, Marikina emerged as a town of shoemakers. Shoemaking began in 1887 through the pioneering efforts of Don Laureano "Kapitan Moy" Guevarra, assisted by Dionesia Cariaquian, Ambrosia Bas Juco, and Gervacio Carlos.

Honed by years in shoe manufacturing, the natives have developed a work ethic that prepared them for the arrival of the heavy industries in the 1950's. With the proliferation of industrial plants came waves of workers who had chosen to stay, rapidly increasing the population.

The city soon became a victim of its own growth, causing a slew of problems. One of these was the deterioration of the Marikina River, which resulted from the reckless behavior of factories and squatter colonies that lined the banks.

Marikina jumpstarted its efforts toward recovery and renewal when Mayor Bayani "BF" Fernando assumed office in 1992.

On December 8, 1996, Marikina was proclaimed a city through Republic Act 8223.

Marikina has since transformed from a backyard community into one that boasts a thriving economy and happy, hardworking, law-abiding, tolerant, and disciplined citizens.

Special thanks to:
IPM Group of Companies

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300 OUTBOUND CALL CENTER AGENTS NEEDED
Happy 379th Founding Anniversary, City of Marikina

KA-ANGKAN 2007
April 13-18
Celebrate the Ka-Angkan Festival at SM City Marikina
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April 15/Event Concert 6 PM
April 16/10 AM
April 16/Event Concert 7 PM
April 16/Event Concert 8 PM
April 17/Activity 9 PM
SM city
Masaya kapag sama-sama ang pamilya!

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gonzalez

N. Korea expels UN nuclear inspectors

SEOUL—NORTH KOREA HAS ORDERED United Nations inspectors to leave the country, apparently following through on a decision to restart its nuclear weapons program despite United States criticism of "provocative threats."

The communist nation announced on Tuesday it would never take part again in six-nation nuclear disarmament talks and would restore the plants at Yongbyon which produced weapons-grade plutonium.

It was responding angrily to a UN Security Council statement on Monday which condemned the North's April 5 rocket launch and vowed tougher enforcement of existing sanctions.

Hours after the North's announcement, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said its inspectors had been ordered out.

North Korea "informed IAEA inspectors in the Yongbyon facility that it is immediately ceasing all cooperation with the IAEA," Mark Vidanovic, spokesperson for the UN nuclear watchdog, told reporters.

"It has requested the removal of all containment and surveillance equipment," following which IAEA inspectors will no longer be provided access to the facility. The inspectors have also been asked to leave the DPRK at the earliest possible time." They were overseeing the disabling of the Yongbyon plants as part of a February 2007 six-nation deal which the North says it will no longer observe.

The six-nation forum, which has been working since 2003, groups the two Koreas, US, China, Russia and Japan.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called the inspectors' expulsion an "unnecessary response" to a legitimate Security Council statement.

"Obviously we hope that there will be an opportunity to discuss this with not only our partners and allies but also to eventually reach North Korea," she added.

Seoul analysts say the North is anxious to fix Obama and the US may have to offer direct talks to save it back on an even dialogue. AFP

Thailand political crisis

Timeline of key events

Thailand revokes passport of exiled former PM Thaksin

BANGKOK—THAILAND REVOKED the passport of Thaksin Shinawatra on Wednesday, escalating a campaign against the ousted former premier and his allies for allegedly inciting deadly anti-government protests.

Authorities said they were acting on learning the expiration of the mass demonstrations that left two people dead and 123 injured this week, after a court issued arrest warrants for Thaksin and 112 core supporters.

Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva has vowed to prosecute all leaders of the protests, which broke up on Tuesday after troops threatened to use force against thousands of demonstrators camped outside his office.

The government said Thaksin's passport was cancelled for his alleged incitement of protests that forced the cancellation of a major summit of Asian leaders in Thailand on Saturday.

"The foreign ministry has cancelled his passport," government spokesperson Panitan Wattanayagorn told AFP. "The incident on the 11th is the reason." "The decision to cancel his passport was based on passport issuing regulations, which state that the ministry can cancel or recall a passport if it can prove that a person has caused disruption to the country," he said.

Thaksin was ousted in a military coup in 2006 and lives in exile to avoid a two-year jail term for corruption. He has made a series of speeches to his supporters in Thailand by video link and phone in recent weeks.

The billionaire tycoon said last month that he was in Dubai but his current whereabouts are unknown. The government cancelled Thaksin's diplomatic passport in December.

That police and critics that they were reaching for their cells on protest leaders' named in arrest warrants. Three have been charged and are in detention, while the others remain at large.

The investigation team is looking for them and checking their home towns to prevent reinstall," said Bangkok police commander in Gen. Wewpong Sawangwatana.

"Police have checked with immigration and found that there are no records of them leaving the country," he said, adding that the thousands sought for sought from the courts for other ally arguments. AFP

Cuban-Americans optimistic, wary of new Cuba rules

MIAMI—CELIA BERMUDEZ WAS READY to pop cork in the town at Versailles Restaurant, Little Havana's culinary heart, after years of separation, she could finally visit her 84-year-old aunt in Cuba, any time she wanted.

Like many Cuban-Americans, Bermudez welcomed President Barack Obama's decision on Monday to break from a half-century of failed Cuban policy toward the communist country and lift restrictions on sending relatives money and making necessary visits.

In a further sign of openness, the White House also announced it would allow US firms to seek telecommunications business there.

"This is fantastic for me. I can actually go see my father's sister. She's my last living relative there," said Bermudez, 47, who came to the US when she was 9 and has never been back.

Although the change is measured—travel is still limited for the rest of Americans and a wide-reaching trade embargo remains in place—the White House portrayed the move as a path to promoting personal freedom in one of the few remaining communist nations.

The changes, first proposed during Obama's presidential campaign, marked another major step away from the hardline policy pursued by the Bush administration.

But the moves fell far short of more dramatic policy adjustments that some—including Republican Gil Inst. Michael Cagan of Indiana—have argued are required to pressure Old Janero to Lotta Amerds and foreign Cuba.

For most Americans, Cuba remains the only country in the world that government prohibits them from visiting—a barrier to personal travelers as well as to the Cuban tourists and dollars that would like to lure them.

In a separate move a day after the announcement was issued, a federal judge struck down a Florida law that would make it more expensive for travel agents to book trips to Cuba. The judge noted the White House announcement in his ruling and said the law is unconstitutional because it interferes with foreign policy. AP

Millions of Indians head to the polls

NEW DELHI—INDIANS VOTE on Thursday in the world's biggest-ever democratic elections, beginning a month of polling widely expected to favor that South Asian giant with a shaky coalition government as it deals with the global economic slump.

In a nation of nearly 1.2 billion people living amusement to divisions of caste, religion and color—there has been little in the campaign to knit the country together.

"A pot-of-pitches and promises, but no national issues that connect," lamented the Times of India newspaper in its front page headline two days before the elections.

The Thursday vote is the first of five phases that will span a month, in which some 714 million people—more than twice the population of the United States—will be eligible to cast ballots.

Results of the massive election, which will use more than 1.4 million electronic voting machines in 828,804 polling stations, are expected on May 16.

But polls indicate neither the governing Congress party nor the main opposition, the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, will win enough seats in the 545-seat lower house of Parliament to rule on their own.

Instead, whoever gets the most votes will likely have to cobble together a coalition out of dozens of smaller parties, many focused on single, regional issues.

Both major parties were already wrestling going into the polls.

Congress, which is making a first-time shift to power, has some ill-make achievements—India's quarter-after economic growth, which has averaged more than 6 percent in recent years—hit by the global economic crisis.

It has also faced severe criticism for the bungled handling of the Mumbai terror attacks in November, when 10 gunmen held sway in the city for three days, killing 164 people.

The BJP has been hampered by an aging, fractured leadership and accusations that it has stoked tensions between India's Hindu majority and large Muslim minority.

But ahead of the elections neither party has clear roads to boost its coffers.

Their candidate for prime minister, Congress' Manmohan Singh, 76, and the BJP's L.K. Advani, 81, have spent much of their time attacking each other, at a long too old and weak for the top job. AP

INDIAN ELECTION POLLS

The main battle of the April 16-May 13 India's general election will be between the Congress Party-led coalition and the National Democratic Alliance led by the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

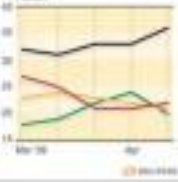
Who will be the next Prime Minister of India?

How many seats Congress and the BJP will win?

(There are 543 election seats in parliament)

	Average	Median
CONGRESS	139	139
BJP	130	130

Who will lead the government?



First cloned camel born in Dubai

THIS undated picture made available on Tuesday by Dubai's Camel Reproduction Center, shows the first cloned camel, called Al Aluwaniyat bijin-Al-Ardha, who was born on April 8. AP

DUBAI—A SCIENTIST SAYS THE world's first cloned camel has been produced in the desert emirate of Dubai.

Nisar Ahmed Bajwa, a senior reproductive biologist at the government's Camel Reproduction Center, says the cloned calf is a baby-doll faced, humped female called Al-Aluwaniyat or bijin-Al-Ardha.

Bajwa was born on April 8 after an uncomplicated gestation of 378 days, the center said in a press release on Tuesday.

The center said that vets scooped stem cells harvested from an ovary of an adult female camel.

Camels are a valuable commodity in the desert sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf. They are used for racing and transport. They are famous for healthy low-fat milk and can fetch owners millions of dollars at camel beauty contests. AP

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Ayala Land raising P1B from sale of debt notes /B2
■ P1.5B worth of projects locating in Subic OKd /B3

Editor Raul C. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Nuñeza

BUSINESS

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Irrigation projects to cost P20B /B6

Remittances rose 4.9% to $1.32B in Feb.

Gov't says deployment of workers up, layoffs easing

By Russel N. Domingo

REMITTANCES COURSED THROUGH BANKS GREW 4.9 percent in February to $1.321 billion as more workers were sent abroad while the rise in layoffs eased, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

This meant an improvement from the 3.1-percent growth in inflows posted in January when remittances reached $1.27 billion.

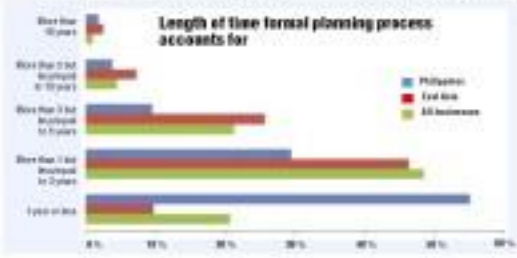
For the first two months of 2009, inflows rose 2.5 percent to $2.59 billion from $2.52 billion a year ago.

The major sources of remittances in January and February were the United States, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Italy and the United Arab Emirates.

"Remittances have been holding up as deployment of overseas Filipino workers has risen during the first two months of the year while the increase in the number of repatriated layoffs has slowed down," BSP Governor Amando M. Tetangco Jr. said in a statement.

Tetangco cited preliminary data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration showing that the total number of workers de-

(CONTINUED ON B2)



Many companies resort to bonus, benefit cuts

By Abigail L. Ho

LOCAL AND FOREIGN FIRMS OPERATING in the country have resorted to scaling unplanned bonuses and benefits just to keep from laying people off.

A recent survey conducted by the Australia-New Zealand, British, Canadian and European chambers of commerce of the Philippines showed that 12 percent of the human resource executives polled had decided to implement a benefits reduction program in their companies.

Another 15 percent said they have also installed a variable bonus reduction program as part of efforts to keep expenses costs down.

In terms of salary, 22 percent of those surveyed said they had implemented a salary freeze. However, 15 percent of the 81 HR executives polled said they gave salary increases to their employees.

While 28 percent of those polled said they were on a freeze hiring phase right now, 19 percent said they were still on hiring mode.

To keep from letting people go, the survey showed that 12 percent of respondents also chose to implement reduced workweeks. Around 10 percent of those sur-

(CONTINUED ON B2)

Bond yields fall on rate cut hopes

GRANT THORNTON STUDY

RP firms short-term planners

By Dorie L. Lucas

LOCAL BUSINESSES HAVE SOME of the shortest planning horizons among those in East Asia, partly because more firms are engaged in industries that are subject to rapidly changing trends, the results of a second international study reveal.

According to the second Grant Thornton international business report, the majority of Philippine private-held businesses have a planning cycle of only a year or less.

Fifty-five percent of surveyed local firms fell into this category, with the rest of the respondents reporting off as the planning horizon moved further.

In comparison, most common planning period for businesses in the region—favored by 49 percent of all respondents—is one to three years, the report showed. Companies in mainland China are the longest-term planners with 44 percent of them planning for three years or more.

The results were released by audit firm Punongbayan & Araullo, the local partner of Grant Thornton.

In the Philippines, most private-held businesses belong to the service sector—restaurants, businesses, business process outsourcing (BPO), professional services, transportation supply etc.—which seem to be able to adjust quickly to chang-

(CONTINUED ON B2)

World Bank OKs $40M in loan for rural projects

THE WORLD BANK APPROVED on Tuesday an additional loan of $40 million to the state-owned Development Bank of the Philippines for rural electrification projects.

The loan is meant for the Rural Power Project, which is aimed at reducing poverty and improving the quality of life of 10,000 rural households in land-to-needy, isolated and poorer areas of the country, particularly in Mindanao.

Bert Hofman, WB Manager for the Philippines, said in a statement that the additional financing would have a direct impact on poverty in the rural areas.

Hofman said that consumption could use electricity to power wells for clean water, which would help prevent water-borne diseases.

With electricity supplied to far-flung villages, people would benefit from more effective social services such as the availability of medicines and vaccines that need refrigeration.

The WB branch-head added that students would have more time for homework with the help of street light while families could have access to information through television and computers.

"Rural electricity provides more opportunities for countryside entrepreneurship, thus expanding economic activities in these areas," Hofman said.

The new loan will allow the expansion of a lineup of projects listed in the original $80-package. The program loan that the WB and the DBP signed in 2001.

The original loan was made up of a $15-million loan to the DBP earmarked for support of electric cooperatives and a $9-million grant from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) that was allocated for the development of Energy's program on renewable energy technologies.

The GEF is a partnership among 179 countries, international institutions, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector to address global environmental issues while supporting national initiatives on sustainable development.

The new loan will also support rural electrification by targeting more households, encouraging more public-private sector partnerships in power-ing, rationalizing and distributing electricity with emphasis on new and renewable sources of energy, and upgrading electric cooperatives to become financially viable and operationally efficient. - Russel N. Domingo

Ayala Land raising ₱1B from sale of debt notes

By Doris C. Dumlao

PROPERTY GIANT AYALA LAND Inc. is raising P1 billion in addition to funds for expansion through the sale of long-term debt notes to be arranged by the metro-centered land firm's parent.

"For now, the funding will be used by the company for general corporate purposes as well as financing its capital expenditure program," ALI chief finance officer Anna Domael told the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The fresh borrowing will be in the form of privately placed, fixed-rate corporate notes with a maturity of seven years. Landbank was considered as the sole lender and manager for the facility.

The company can start drawing from the facility within six months from the signing of the agreement with Landbank last April 15, Ysmael said.

ALI is the country's biggest property company with a market capitalization of ₱75.5 billion as of yesterday's close of ₱5.30 a share at the local stock market.

ALI earlier announced that it had set aside ₱17.5 billion for capital spending this year, 8 percent lower than its outlay in 2008. The ongoing which posted a 9-percent growth in 2008 net income despite the turbulent global environment, spent a record ₱19.9 billion in capital expenditure last year.

About half of ALI's capital spending is meant to fund residential developments, despite a cautious outlook on the high-end segment of the market. The company also set aside 17 percent of its budget to acquire land for future development, 13 percent for mall development and the rest for corporate business.

The rest of ALI's capital spending will be covered by internally generated funds, preselling proceeds and windfall from the sale of nonmore assets.

ALI has organized its operations into several core businesses and support businesses. Its core businesses are property development, commercial development, shopping centers, corporate businesses and property management. On the other end, its support businesses consist of construction, hotels, property management and waterworks operations.

Taps Landbank as underwriter

Stocks tumble on heavy selling in PLDT, EDC

LOCAL STOCKS TUMBLED FOR the third straight session yesterday, threatening a key barrier at 2,000, as news on bleak retail sales in the United States dampened sentiment across the region while investors awaited clues on local first-quarter corporate results.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index shed another 0.72 percent to close at 2,002.49 yesterday, weighed down by selling on telecommunications giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and geothermal power operator Energy Development Corp.

This developed as a surprise fall in US retail sales raised expectations on an economic rebound. But waning interest persists in Wall Street.

"Optimism has given way to caution, [as the expectation] at the onset of the earnings season. While earnings reports have started to come in from companies in the United States, broad recoveries have yet to begin. Good earnings reports typically start during bear to rebound," said Antonio Rocha, vice president of local brokerage AB Capital Securities said in its daily report.

[Doris C. Dumlao]

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Finance
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS
Collection District 0-B

MANILA INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER PORT

April 27, 2009

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 2801 to 2810 of the TCCP, as amended, in relation to SMC 5-2003 dated March 17, 2003 and SMC 19-2003 dated 23 July 2003, there will be a Public Auction Sale through SEALED BIDDING, to be conducted by the Port on **April 29, 2009, at 1:30 P.M.** to be held at the 3rd floor MICP Building, Bank Harbor, San Roque Sasa, Davao, Manila, the herein described articles or lot, listed hereto, shall be available for viewing on **April 17, 2009** in the vicinity of a failed building. The second auction shall be conducted on the first business day following the first bidding.

Lot No.	Owner	Description	Location
1	HAROLD CONDORES G.I. No. 09-005 c/o Administrator Tel. no. Wala po	1,500 boxes 20 kgs/box ASTONES WATER SQUASH Date of Arrival: 4/09	Location: ICTSI-C1 Cond. No. MWU 0709-04-10 Hulo: 20040402; Hulo: 07/10-04-10
2	GUEST TAN G.I. No. 09-006 c/o Administrator Tel. no. Wala po	1,500 bags, 50 kg/bag REFINED WHITE SUGAR Date of Arrival: 4-11-09	Location: ICTSI-C1 Cond. No. ELGU0709-04 ELGU0709-07 to ELGU0709-10, ELGU0709-12 ELGU0709-15, ELGU0709-17 to ELGU0709-20 ELGU0709-22 to ELGU0709-25, ELGU0709-27 ELGU0709-30 to ELGU0709-32
3	FREIGHT FORWARDERS PHILS. INC. G.I. No. 09-002 c/o Administrator Tel. no. Wala po	1,000 box, Miscellaneous Wet And Knapp Items (Light) Expiry Date: June 2009 (Product of France) Date of Arrival: 3-15-09	Location: ICTSI-C1 Cond. No. TGHU 1000000-02 MSKU 1000000-06

Terms and Conditions of Public Auction:

1. Filing of Bidder's Registration Form (with name, address and TIN) at least two (2) days prior to the day of auction.
2. Payment of Php1,000.00 Registration Fee (non-refundable).
3. Posting of duly accepted bond or cash or manager's check in an amount equivalent to twenty percent (20%) of the floor price for each sale lot. The bond shall be refundable to the losing bidder after the closing of the auction. The bond shall not, however, be required when the floor price of a sale lot is less than ten thousand pesos (₱ 10,000.00).
4. Registration on the logbook for registered bidders indicating the name, address and TIN to be made with the Cash Collection Unit (CCU) only before the date of auction closing and shall be on first come/first, proceeding the time of actual bidding. Thereafter registration is closed.
5. Submission of all participants, whether natural or juridical, together with the Bidder's Registration Form the latest certified true copy of Income and/or Business Tax Returns duly stamped and received by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) with a validated tax payment made thereon.
6. Auction to be conducted through the sealed bids shall be submitted and opened in public by the Auction Committee at or near date and place as indicated in the Notice of Auction Sale. The highest bid shall be declared as the winner except when clustering occurs.
7. Clustering occurs when the difference between the highest and the second highest bid is within ten percent (10%) of the highest bid. In such cases, an open bidding shall be conducted among the bidders of the particular sale lot who are present with the highest bid upon calling on the case their price. Only bids subsequently made which are equal to or more than the price shall be considered and the highest bid in the open bidding shall be declared as the winner. Otherwise, the highest sealed bid shall be declared as the winner.
8. Payment of highest bidder in cash or manager's check or bond fifty percent (50%) of the amount on the said upon announcement of the winning bid as duly certified by the Auction Committee and the COA representative. The remaining balance of 50% shall be paid on the succeeding business day.
9. Payments with Cashier's/Manager's Check/Cash to the BOC/MICP shall bear the following:
   a. Pay to the order of Land Bank of the Philippines-BOC MICP E.O.;
   b. For credit of the Bureau of Customs
   c. For the account of

   (Bidder)
10. A failed bidding shall be declared by the Auction Committee when any of the following circumstances occurs:
    a. When there is only one sealed bid, the same shall not be opened.
    b. When there are two sealed bids but there is only one bid higher than the floor price.
    c. When highest bidder fails to comply with any of the payments required in section 4 hereof. said bidder shall be disqualified from participating further in the auction sale and when applicable, the negotiated sale thereof without prejudice to the forfeiture of the cash bond and any payment made and imposition of other sanctions as may be warranted.
11. When a failed bidding is declared, the sale on shall be effected in a second auction to be held on the third business day after the first failed auction at the same floor price without need of further advertisement/posting. In case of perishable goods, the second auction shall be conducted on the first business day following the first failed bidding.

For further details, please contact Elizabeth D. Ko-o-Wy, Manuel O. Mercenes (Port Auditor) and Cargo Disposal Division (MICP, Tel. No. 082-91-91 Loc. 2205) or 547-0977.

(Sgd.) ATTY. ADELINA S.E. MOLINA
District Collector of Customs

Many ...

From page B-1

repaid, however, have already been factored in employment redundancy measures.

In general, 79 percent of the 68 executives surveyed said current economic conditions have affected their 2009 budgets for the year, forcing them to institute measures that were not originally in their game plans.

Still, 54 percent have not implemented any HR measures, choosing instead to see how the economy would change over the course of the year.

The survey was conducted on March 27 during a Flexible Workweek forum conducted by the various chambers in an effort to help local and foreign businesses make wise decisions about their employees and their businesses in general.

It is for these reasons that he is more optimistic about the flexibility programs proposed by the Department of Labor and Employment before. The chamber focused mainly on what they should do in the future," said Peter Schwendler, country chair for the vice president of the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines.

P1.5B worth of projects locating in Subic OKd

580 new jobs to be created in the zone

By Abigail L. Ho

THE SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY approved in the first quarter investments worth P1.5 billion in 30 new projects locating in Subic Freeport.

SBMA Administrator Armand Arreza said these projects, once completed, would create about 580 new jobs.

These projects brought to 866 the total number of investors registered in the area, he said in a statement yesterday.

"A 13.6 percent growth from the same period last year despite this global crisis indicates that the Subic Bay Freeport has achieved an unparalleled level of economic resiliency," he said.

SBMA Senior Deputy Administrator for business first Sara said the biggest projected projects in the first part were related to the maritime and logistics industries.

The biggest committed investment was by local firm Tomexis Shipping Inc. at P975.3 million. The company would buy and sell vessels, as well as provide various shipping services such as logistics and warehousing.

The second and third largest investment commitments also came from the maritime and logistics firms, Sasa said.

These were from 7,137 Islands Shipping Corp., P221 million for its cruise ship operations and Eastern Subic Fuel Depot Corp., P80.8 million for the establishment of service stations and petroleum product retail outlets around the free port.

Also among the top 10 investors in the first quarter were Subic Molyseals Concrete Industries Trading Inc. with a P49.7 million investment in ready-mix concrete products manufacturing; as well as warehousing, import, export and reselling of construction materials, equipment and machinery; BA Leigh Realty Construction Corp., P43 million for the development of housing units; and Pacesetter Automotive Corp., P39 million for a business that will engage in the sale and distribution of motor vehicles, spare parts and accessories, as well as vehicle repair, maintenance and leasing activities.

Other big investments in the area are from 1995-Delta Philippines Ltd. Co. at P36.1 million for the construction, development and operation of a container terminal; import and profit corporation facilities; and Faun Kanri Philippines Inc. at P28.1 million for the production of plastic goods.

Hankook Mirae-ako Philippines Corp. also committed to invest P19.3 million, while Bongtree Corp. said it would infuse P16.2 million in a real estate business in the area.

Earth + Style to spend P2B for expansion

By Abigail L. Ho

EARTH + STYLE CORP. OF THE EXTRAORdinary Group of Companies engrave sales this year to be around the same as last year's P2.4 billion, but it still plans to invest P2 billion to expand existing developments.

In a briefing held recently, Extraordinary Group president Victor Manalang said sales of existing developments might go down by 15-20 percent this year, but the company could still manage to post the growth overall by embarking on new projects.

"We will have inventory in Cavite—in Imus and Dasmariñas. The improvement in Nuvali. Tierra Encanto will allow better access in there, so we can do more extensive development in those areas," he said.

"We launched a couple of projects in those areas, one of which is Happy Homes, a low- to middle-income development with house-and-lot packaged selling for some P600,000. We'll also have multiple product categories there," he said.

For three new developments and for other developments in the company's Athlacan New Busan (ANB) township, he said Earth + Style had earmarked P2 billion a year for the next two years.

The ANB development, he said, was already 70 percent sold, with 2,000 households already there. Once fully built, the ANB township should have 3,000 houses.

About 20 percent of the township had yet to be developed, he said.

"We balance our village openings so there's always available inventory. If one inventory goes down to just three to six months, then we open the next phase of development for a particular product category," he explained.

Chemrez profit drops by 22%

By Doris C. Dumlao

CHEMREZ TECHNOLOGIES INC.—PHI's dissave of binders, powder coatings, resins and other specialty chemicals—has reported a 22.5 percent decline in profit last year on lower margins arising from stiff competition and volatility in commodity prices.

Its 2008 profit hit P272 million, down from P481 million a year ago. Consolidated sales, however, went up by 23.9 percent over a year ago to P4.66 billion mostly due to bulkier sales.

The company's net profit margin dropped to 6 percent last year from 13.7 percent in 2007. This was felt most in the petrochemicals segment, the bulk of which is bitumen, where margins dipped from 21 percent to 18.2 percent.

"The worldwide trend of rising raw material costs peaked in the third quarter, and these costs started to fall dramatically thereafter. The volatility in raw material prices resulted in profit margins being squeezed, as inventory costs remained high while selling prices fell," the company disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

"Aside from the reduction in revenue on oil and nutritional prices, the business experienced increased competition, which resulted in lower selling prices," it added.

There are already 11 companies registered with the Department of Energy as biodiesel manufacturers, with total production capacity of more than 300 million liters per year, more than double the projected requirements, Chemrez said.

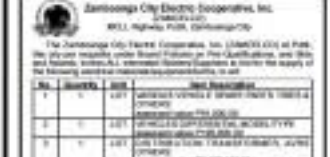
But Chemrez said net turnover surged in 2008 as it was in this full year of the implementation of the mandated 1 percent biodiesel blend, for all diesel sold in the Philippines, as required by the Biofuels Act of 2006.

"There were also increases/gains in almost all of the company's traditional product lines, as a result of the strong economy and high commodity prices in the first half of 2008, though the trend reversed in the second half of the third quarter," the company said.

The company said growth in exports, particularly in the oleochemicals business, remained encouraging. Biodiesel and oleochemical sales surged 65.9 percent in 2008 compared to 2007, and contributed 31.9 percent of consolidated sales.

Resins and specialty products sales fell by 3 percent but still accounted for 43.2 percent of sales. Powder coating sales, which accounted for 4.9 percent of sales, dropped 11.4 percent.

"The fall in revenues in the resins and powder coating segments reflect the slowdown already seen in the construction, appliances and packaging industries, which are some of its target markets," the company said in the disclosure.



From the Ivatans of Batanes to the Tawi-tawians of Tawi-tawi Unites the Filipino

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RP firms . . .

From page B1

ing trends; this explains the shorter planning cycle," the report said.

In the Chinese survey, most private businesses belonged to the manufacturing sector—as industry which needs longer planning cycles.

The survey also asked business leaders what initiatives they implemented to boost profitability and which of these have been most successful for their organizations.

According to businessmen, product innovation is the most successful initiative for boosting profitability with 20 percent of firms in the region citing it as their most effective tool.

By comparison, 23 percent of Filipino business leaders who were surveyed said that "cutting or controlling costs" was the most successful initiative for expanding their bottom lines.

Outsourcing followed closely with 21 percent of respondents favoring this method.

"These two efforts are both closely related to efficiency and cost reductions," said Grey Navarro, managing partner and CEO of PricewaterhouseCoopers. "With a productivity review, companies can revisit their processes and supply chains, address inefficiencies, and leverage with an outsourcing procedure that gives them more room for their buck."

"This may involve outsourcing certain functions, which is what an increasing number of businesses in more advanced markets are doing," he added.

The other most successful initiatives for local private firms are product innovation (18 percent), pricing strategy (14 percent), and cost-cutting (7 percent).

Remittances rose . . .

From page B1

ployed overseas in January and February grew 27.3 percent year-on-year to 203,348 from 222,006.

The new deal is expected to help the Department of Labor and Employment easing the Philippines would remove the labor requirement with South Korea under the Employment Permit System.

Expected to be signed in May, the deal would give priority to finding employment to displaced Filipinos working in South Korea.

The government has also intensified efforts to redeploy returnee overseas Filipino workers to countries that have not been severely affected by the global financial turmoil.

This is in addition to hiring agreements forged with some host countries like Canada, Australia, Japan and Middle East countries that are expected to open job opportunities in the sectors of healthcare, infrastructure, power and energy, and retail areas.

Specifically, Saudi Arabia and Libya continue to hire workers in the construction and healthcare industries.

The reduction in 2010 of the Americans naval forces from Japan to Guam is also expected to provide jobs to Filipinos.

"Commercial banks continued expansion of their commercial and domestic market coverage to capture a larger share of the global remittance market as they acclimated to contain the inflow of remittances," Tetangco said.

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DepED

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID (RE-BID)

No.	Name of Project	Name and Location of the Contract (Brief Description)
1	Alternative Learning System Program for Out-of-School Youth	P 5,000,000.00
2	Literacy Education Accreditation Training Program for Out-of-School Youth and Non-Graduates and Elders	P 5,000,000.00

(Two (2) lots covered by this one (1) set of bid documents)

1. The bid is open to contractors registered with the Construction Industry Authority of the Philippines (CIAP) and other contractors who are eligible and qualified to participate in government projects. Bidders must submit valid and current Mayor's/Business Permit, Tax Clearance, Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License and Registration and Valid Income/Business Tax Return. The Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License must be Category "A" with Financial Capability (AAAA) and Trade Classification (GENERAL ENGINEERING WORKS) for the Infrastructure Projects and Trade Classification (GENERAL BUILDING AND ENGINEERING WORKS) for the Educational Facilities Projects.
2. All prospective bidders shall submit the following documents: Latest Income/Business Tax Return, Valid and Current Mayor's/Business Permit, Tax Clearance, Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License and Registration, Statement of Contractor's Experience and Capability, and Statement of Ongoing Projects.
3. The schedule of activities is as follows:

Activities	Schedule
Distribution of bid documents and Application for Eligibility	April 15-17, 2009
Submission of Application for Eligibility	April 15-21, 2009
Evaluation of Applications for Eligibility (Prequalification)	April 22, 2009, 2:00 PM
Issuance of Eligibility Clearance and Bid Bulletin	April 27, 2009
Pre-bid Conference	May 7, 2009, 2:00 PM
Bid Opening	May 19, 2009, 10:00 AM

4. The Schedule of Eligibility Requirements (which includes all the Tax Clearance, Mayor's/Business Permit, Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License and Registration, Statement of Contractor's Experience and Capability, Statement of Ongoing Projects, and Statement of Financial Capability) and Bid Documents may be purchased from the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00 each set.
5. The Bid Documents shall be submitted on or before 10:00 AM of May 19, 2009 at the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat, which is open to all bidders who are duly qualified to participate in the bidding.
6. The Bid Documents shall be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend the activity at the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat. Bids will be evaluated on the basis of the Bid Documents only.
7. The Department of Education reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract without incurring any liability, and to waive any defect therein to best serve the interest of the government.
8. For further information, please refer to the BAC Secretariat at the address below.

ATTY. [illegible]
Chairman, BAC

Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc.
(ZAMCELCO)
M.C.L. Highway, Putik, Zamboanga City

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Putik, Zamboanga City pursuant to the Philippine Government Procurement Reform Act (Republic Act 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Policy Board Technical Support Office (GPPB-TSO) invites all eligible contractors to participate in the following procurement activities:

No.	Quantity	Unit	Item Description
1	1	LOT	[illegible]
2	1	LOT	[illegible]
3	1	LOT	[illegible]
4	1	LOT	[illegible]
5	1	LOT	[illegible]
6	1	LOT	[illegible]

The requirements for the prequalification of contractors shall be submitted to the Chairman of the Bids and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department before the deadline of submission of bids on or before 2:00 p.m. on March 26, 2009. Five percent (5%) Bid Bond is required as a matter of policy.

The right is reserved to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the City by formally rejecting all bids without any liability.

Date: [illegible]
Chairman, BAC

Asia stocks retreat from 6-month highs; China hopes limit drop

HONG KONG—ASIAN STOCKS pulled back from six-month highs yesterday but held up after the drop on Wall Street overnight, with hopes for more Chinese stimulus spending helping offset reports of weak first-quarter growth.

Investors were rushing to an gains after many equity markets have jumped between 20 percent and 30 percent since early March, with Asian markets leading the charge higher on signs that China is helping drive a regional growth pickup, analysts said.

Higher-yielding currencies, such as the Australian dollar, relinquished some of their hefty gains in the past month after data showing a surprisingly big drop in US retail sales last month highlighted the bumpy road to recovery in the recession-hit global economy.

But gains in safe-haven government bonds were limited as investors fret about the scope of coming supply to fund government spending aimed at reviving the economy, and as more than a dozen central banks may have finished with their aggressive rate cuts.

"We've been expecting the first quarter of 2009 to be the bottom of this cycle, and it doesn't look like we will be disappointed," said a study from Nomura, Chinese economy strategists at brokerage CLSA in Shanghai.

"Whether the fall year numbers is closer to 7 percent or to 8 percent is far less important than our firm conviction that the Chinese economy will be very strong in the second half of 2009, and that this strength should last well into 2010," Nomura said.

The MSCI index of Asia-Pacific stocks outside Japan fell 1.4 percent, led by a drop in resource shares as a weaker metology shares—some of the biggest gainers in the rally.

Mitsubishi were lighter than the previous day when stocks jumped. The increase in volumes on days of solid gains had suggested more market players have become more confident in pushing money to work in riskier assets.

On Tuesday, the US S&P 500 shed 2 percent, and S&P futures were pointing to further losses with a drop of 0.17 percent in Asia.

After the closing bell, Intel Corp. said the worst was over for the battered tech sector but its shares tumbled after it failed to give a clear revenue forecast, citing the economic uncertainty.

US corporate earnings season kicks into high gear this week, stirring more caution among investors.

Japan's Nikkei average fell 1.1 percent, pulling further away from a three-month peak reached last week.

Japanese government bonds gained on the stock retreat and a solid auction of 30-year paper the previous day while South Korean government bonds extended gains after the Korea Securities Finance Corp. joined peoples funds and other investors to raise advantage of higher yields to buy.

Equity strategists at HSBC said in a note to clients that what they called the volatility bubble—highlighted by the violent plunge in stocks and other assets in late 2008—may be over.

The dollar was down 0.3 percent at 98.38 yen, while the Australian dollar dropped 1.3 percent to 78.50 yen after having reached a six-month high the previous day.

Gold edged up $2.55 an ounce to $891.40, helped to pare after the world's largest gold-backed ETF said its holdings of bullion remained at a record high.

Reuters

CAUTIOUS: Women farm at a market in Jakarta. Indonesia expects the impact of the global economic downturn on the domestic economy to dissipate this year, said Planning and Development Minister Prakash Soetrto.

Obama, Bernanke see signs of hope for economy

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT Barack Obama said there were signs his economic policies were beginning to bear fruit, but warned that the United States still faced a long struggle in finding its way out of its economic and financial rut.

Coming out of an intense two weeks focused on international affairs, including a hostage drama after Somali pirates briefly hijacked an American ship, the White House is shifting resources and global attention back on the financial storm that has ravaged the world.

The president's message was reinforced by Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke, who said Tuesday there were "tentative signs" that the economic slide was easing. But he also warned that any hope for a lasting recovery hinges on the government's success in stabilizing shaky financial markets and getting credit to flow more freely again.

Specifically, the Fed chief mentioned improvements in recent data on home and auto sales, home building and consumer spending as flickering signs of encouragement.

"Recently we have seen tentative signs that the sharp decline in economic activity may be slowing," Bernanke said during a speech at Woodrow College in Atlanta.

Obama's speech was a thorough and lengthy summing up of how the economic began and what the administration has done to counter the downturn and prevent it turning in disaster-like to the Depression and global financial system since perilously close to collapse in the last months of 2008.

"There is no doubt that times are still tough. By no means are we out of the woods just yet. But from where we stand, for the very first time, we are beginning to see glimmers of hope," the president said in a speech at Georgetown University.

Reaching into the Bible for his inspiration, Obama cited Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, to compare the American economic system he inherited to the man who build his house on a pile of sand. The same mistakes that Obama said will emerge from investors' unsafe economic outlights in seven decades must be like the strong house built by the man who used a foundation of stone.

Economists are divided on whether the recession is beginning to show itself—or lies in the middle of a lull, before striking hard again. But with some good news trickling out of various corners in the US economy and his administration entering the symbolic 100-day mark, Obama felt the need to sum up what his administration has done so far and draw a map of where it wants to take the economic system.

The speech did not outline any new programs or initiatives.

Hours before the speech, a cold dose of reality came in the form of a report saying retail sales fell unexpectedly in March, decreasing by 1.1 percent. That was the biggest decline in three months and a result weaker showing than the 0.9 percent increase that analysts expected. At the same time, wholesale prices dropped sharply last month as the cost of gasoline and other energy plummeted, fresh evidence that inflation appeared to pose little threat to the economy.

Tuesday's indicators epitomized a continuing problem for government policymakers and ordinary people alike: How to figure out where the economy is headed amid such often contradictory business signals.

To review it, the Fed has cut a key bank lending rate to a record low of near zero and has rolled out a number of radical programs to spur lending to Americans, a key ingredient to turning around the economy.

On that front, the Fed recently plowed $1.2 trillion into the economy in an attempt to reduce interest rates for mortgages and other loans. The Fed, meanwhile, also is considering expanding a program to jump-start consumer lending, Bernanke said.

Many analysts predict the economy will continue to shrink in the April-June quarter but not nearly as much as it had been—perhaps at a rate of 2 to 2.5 percent.

The economy shrank at a 6.3-percent rate in the final three months of 2008, the worst showing in a quarter in 26 years.

The government is having a three-headed monster: Housing, credit and financial crises, which are the worst since the 1930s.

"The current crisis has been one of the most difficult financial and economic episodes in modern history," Bernanke said.

Unemployment hit a 25-year high of 8.5 percent in March, and many people still are losing their homes or jobs, or fear they will lose them. Still, there has been a drop in unemployment benefit filings, and several studies have predicted solid April rates.

AP

UBS cuts 8,700 more jobs, losses mount

ZURICH/SINGAPORE—SWISS bank UBS said yesterday it was cutting a further 8,700 jobs as losses from the global financial crisis mount, while data from the United States in China and Korea gave little hope of an imminent end to the economic downturn.

Stocks fell as companies offered grim or vague assessments of the months ahead, raising doubts about the effectiveness of the policy responses so far.

US President Barack Obama said he was "cautiously optimistic" economies were starting to work, but surprisingly weak US retail sales data since Wall Street lower on Tuesday.

"The realities of a still uncertain lending market, extremely weak and arguably worsening labor market conditions, and higher unemployment have once again translated into the appalling reality of consumers cutting back," said Lindsay Piegza, economic analyst at FTN Financial in New York.

In China, which is rolling out its own $585-billion stimulus plan, gross domestic product probably grew at its slowest second rate on record in the first quarter, according to a local media report. But the quarter-on-quarter growth, estimated by analysts at above 6 percent, might point to a recovery in the world's third-largest economy.

Official trade data is due for release on Thursday.

In South Korea, the unemployment rate rose to its highest in about three and a half years in March, and analysts said they expected further job losses in the months ahead.

Downbeat news from companies around the globe seemed to support the view that profits will suffer and more job cuts will follow before things improve.

UBS said it would post a first-quarter loss of nearly 2 billion Swiss francs ($1.74 billion) and cut 8,700 jobs as it struggles to recover from the crisis.

Indian outsourcing firm Infosys Technologies Ltd. issued a downbeat forecast, saying earnings and margins would fall this year, sending its shares lower.

Oil Tuesday fund Corp. been forecasts with its results and said it believed personal computer sales hit bottom in the first quarter. Four other world's top shipmakers did not give a formal revenue outlook for the current quarter, sending its shares down 4.6 percent in after-hours trade.

And No. 2 US telecom search provider Yahoo Inc. is preparing to lay off several hundred workers, a source with knowledge of the situation told Reuters.

Stocks and higher-yielding currencies such as the Australian dollar fell as investors rushed to an recent gains and cut their exposure to risky assets.

Japan's Nikkei average fell 1.1 percent, while MSCI's measure of stocks elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region fell 1.4 percent.

Mounting job losses, a lack of access to credit and a slump in the value of investments have all played havoc with consumer confidence around the globe.

Seeking to reassure Americans, President Barack Obama said moves to recapitalize banks, strengthen the housing market and revive the auto sector were "necessary pieces of the recovery puzzle." And taken together, these actions are starting to generate signs of encouraging progress," he said in a speech on the moves taken since he took office. "There is no doubt that times are still tough. By no means are we out of the woods yet."

US Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke also said there were hopeful signs, including the latest data on home sales, home building and consumer spending, as well as rates of new cuts.

"A leveling out of economic activity in the first step toward recovery," he said in a speech.

But both Bernanke and White House adviser Christina Romer said there recovery are still contracting.

Global financial conditions could remain tight for several more years, a top official at Australia's central bank said.

"What happens over the next few years, at least, is highly uncertain," said Glenn Stevens, governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia and chairman of the Financial Stability Department, told a conference.

"Confidence in the financial system remains fragile." Most of the world is experiencing, "what has already been a long and severe recession," making issues of regulation and the financial system, or top Federal Reserve official said.

Eric Rosengren, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, said the current financial crisis highlighted the need for a systemic risk regulator, but a regulator would have "great challenges" and would need sufficient authority to change financial institutions' behavior.

Thailand, which has been grappling with political instability as well as the global financial turmoil, saw investor borrowing and expand its stimulus package, the finance minister told the Financial Times in an interview.

Reuters

World 2009 oil demand seen 180,000 bpd less-EIA

WASHINGTON—THE US ENERGY Information Administration on Tuesday cut its forecast for 2009 world oil demand by 180,000 barrels per day from its prior March estimate to 84.49 million bpd, as the global economy is expected to shrink 0.6 percent this year.

In its new monthly energy forecast, the agency said it thinks world oil demand in 2010 to increase to 85.22 million bpd, 70,000 bpd higher than it forecast last month, driven by a recovery of global economic growth in 2.6 percent.

"Higher oil prices, as well as the change in market sentiment to a slightly less pessimistic outlook, may also reflect the belief that economic stimulus and recovery policies from central banks and governments have slowed down the decline in demand and even improved the chances for an economic upturn and, consequently, higher oil demand, later this year," EIA said.

The EIA has slashed its outlook for 2009 global oil demand by 12 mil of for last 12-monthly forecasts.

For the United States, which is the world's biggest petroleum consumer, EIA cut its forecast for oil demand this year by 30,000 bpd to 18.99 million bpd.

However, the agency's estimate for US oil consumption in 2010 was raised by 60,000 bpd to 19.04 million bpd, thanks to the expected economic recovery.

Separately, EIA projected Opec crude oil production to be 1.30,000 bpd less this year from earlier estimates to 28.78 million bpd.

"Lower crude oil production by members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries has lowered global petroleum supplies, substantially offsetting reduced oil demand caused by the global economic recession," the EIA said.

JAN ODLYNE Development Corp. employees hold a sample of wind turbine blade. Despite a drop in demand for biofuels rises, the need for crude oil is expected to ease.

Non-Opec oil output is seen averaging 49.77 million bpd for 2009, up 30,000 bpd from the EIA's prior forecast.

"The prospects of limited growth in non-Opec production and the expected start of economic recovery later this year, that should increase oil consumption and the demand for Opec oil, are the main factors supporting the 'upward price path' for crude oil prices, the agency said.

US crude oil prices are forecast to average $52 a barrel this year because of the global economic downturn, and is seeing there is an economic recovery in 2010 oil will rise to an average $63 next year, the EIA said.

Reuters

BUSINESS

Irrigation projects to cost ₱20B

Gov't to focus on rehabilitation of existing facilities in '09 and '10

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE SPENDING between P12 billion and P20 billion to rehabilitate irrigation assets covering 290,000 hectares of farm land this year and in 2010.

In an interview, SMA Rice Program director Francisco Mendonza said the rehabilitation of existing irrigation facilities was initially estimated to cost P6 billion this year but this could increase to P10 billion.

The same amount might be needed for next year, he said.

Mendonza said about 3 percent of the country's irrigation facilities got damaged yearly.

In 2008, he said irrigation facilities covering about 368,000 hectares were identified for rehabilitation.

"Going into 2009, there were 290,000 hectares left to rehabilitate. We aim to restore them fully by 2010 to 2011," Mendonza said.

He said the rehabilitation of existing facilities were prioritized because it would cost less than putting up new ones and that it would have immediate impact on agriculture production.

"It costs about P60,000 per hectare to restore damaged facilities and it costs P800,000 to P900,000 per hectare to construct new ones. Perhaps later, when we have recovered existing facilities, we will venture to re-putting up new ones," he said.

A total of 1.3 million hectares of farm land are currently served by irrigation facilities of the National Irrigation Authority.

For 2009, the government earmarked P9.55 billion for irrigation projects. This covered the repair and rehabilitation of irrigation systems serving 142,250 hectares and the construction of new systems that covered another 28,353 hectares.

The agriculture department earlier said that idle irrigation systems as of the first semester of 2008 rendered unproductive some 300,000 hectares of rice land, which could have produced 29.4 million tons of rice.

The SRA prioritized last year several big-ticket projects, which were expected to benefit 240,000 farmers.

These included the Bauang-Pugo-Sudipen Project in Ilocos Sur; Cotabato Multipurpose Irrigation and Power Project in Western Bohol; Kabuhayan Irrigation Project in Maguindanao; Hello Ifor Garoling Agricultural Advancement Project in Northern Samar; Addalam Irrigation Project in Quirino; Agno River Integrated Irrigation Project in Pangasinan; and the Bagohoy Irrigation System Rehabilitation and Improvement Project in Negros Occidental.

The increased production area, complemented by modern farming technology including the use of high-yielding seed, is expected to result in a substantial increase in crop production.

FUNDS to be used for improvement of infrastructure support

DA ending rice, corn seed subsidy program

ILAGAN, ISABELA (CAGAYAN VALLEY)—THE Department of Agriculture has confirmed talks that it will stop granting seed subsidies for hybrid rice and corn.

"We are ending seed subsidy starting this wet season," Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said in an interview after the inauguration of the Year One in Program Delta.

Yap said the funds diverted to rice seed subsidies would instead be used to support seed producers through infrastructure support and provision of equipment such as seed dryers.

"In the long run, that will be more sustainable," he said.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Dionisio Avanzado said separately that corn seed subsidy would also stop.

"Instead, we will focus on the establishment of postharvest facilities such as corn cob dryers and shellers, and also the provision of farm mechanization tools as tractors, shallow tube wells. We will give priority in new corn production areas," Avanzado said.

Subsidy for certified seeds will not be completely carried over to 2010 but will be reduced by 50 percent, from ₱1,200 to ₱600 per season, Yap said. SMA Rice Program director Francisco Mendonza did not say whether the subsidy would be completely gone by the dry crop of 2010.

They did say that existing financing from seed subsidy may not be expected to pull down grain production.

The officials stood by initial estimates that rice production would reach 7.2 to 7.3 million metric tons in the first six months of the year compared to 7.1 million metric tons in the same period last year.

Rice is expected to remain as one of the growth drivers of the agriculture sector. Total dams called to expand to increase by 3.9 percent this year.

Palafox is seen to be the top growth driver. Other growth drivers are bananas, pineapples, poultry, and corn. Rizza T. Olchondra

Sultan Kudarat Electric Cooperative, Inc.

INVITATION FOR BIDS

(PDI-April 16 & 17, 2009)

DMIA Terminal 2 seen completed next year

CLARK FREEPORT—THE TERminal 2 project, which aims to serve three to four million passengers at the Clark's Diosdado Macapagal International Airport here, will not be completed this year, Presidential Management Staff chief Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said.

"The Clark terminal will not be finished," Esperon told the reporters on television here earlier. He cited time constraint as the reason for the delay.

Two officials of Clark International Airport Corp., the state agency that oversees the development of the DMIA, confirmed Esperon's report.

"We, for this year, for the months (otherwise) for holiday operation) (to) joint venture (public-private sector partnership) is going strong," said Victor Jose Lacson, CIAC president and chief executive officer.

Lacson said the joint venture schedule for completion (JVSC) was doing the eligibility check on one proponent that would receive final negotiation.

If that is done, the CIAC board will submit the proponent to a 30-day public competitive challenge.

"Immediate challenges are running," Lacson said. "Though, we don't think that now, we certainly will have a 'Terminal 2 in 2010.'"

Of the six that offered unsolicited proposals, Double Aces Group Inc. (Dagi) has qualified for detailed evaluation and eligibility check to build and operate the new terminal, said Romeo Dyaco Jr., CIAC vice president for administration and finance. Dyaco chairs the JVSC.

Dagi is led by Dutch firm Eglo with Italian firm Ansaldo and Australian Leighton as partners and contractors, he said. Diosdado Esteves, Dagi-ore Group Corp.

DOE seeks consumers' views on meter rule

THE ENERGY REGULATORY Commission has urged consumers and stakeholders to submit their comments on the proposed rules to govern the installation of electrical meters—a move seen to help curb electricity pilferage.

According to the second draft of the proposed rules, the electrical meters, which should be 10cm off the ground to be tamperproof, will also be made accessible and visible for reading and testing by both the distribution utility and the consumer.

As specified under the Magna Carta for Residential Electricity Consumers, the electrical meters should not be more than three meters high from the nation on which one would stand to operate or inspect the meter.

The Magna Carta would allow meters to be located in offices or areas leased or facilitated without an office without title or rights, and in areas with high incidence of illegal service connections, meter vandalism and tampering.

The public has until May 7 to submit their comments on the draft rules. Amy R. Nunez

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Longer internship program for students pushed

By Abigail L. Ho

A BACCALAUREATE COLLEGE DEGREE holder in the Philippines should have put in around 16 or 17 years of classroom studies—a year in nursery, a year in kindergarten, six years in grade school, four years in high school and four years in college.

Some countries also require on-the-job training.

But those 500 hour or 200-hour internships, completed within two to three months, are often not enough to equip students with the experience they need to face the "real world," according to foreign chambers in Bonifacio.

Henry Schumacher, executive vice president of the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, said the foreign chambers were in discussions with local universities and colleges to get them to agree to a program that would have longer internship periods collect to in the curriculum.

"We need our members to create deeper relationships with universities and colleges. We want (an intern-ship) program that starts much earlier and lasts longer. It would cover the last two years of college," he said in a briefing yesterday.

DEEC SAYS book-learning is hardly enough, particularly during extremely competitive times.

"We want to make the academe understand that we have a role to play to get people employed to elaborate suggestions," he added.

American Semi-Technical Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines vice president Dale Wood said book knowledge was hardly enough, particularly during extremely competitive times.

"We're trying to match people with the companies that have jobs to offer. People should have the necessary skills," he said. "Graduate must practical experience in working with companies. This way they can apply their book knowledge better."

Leslie Stokes, chair of the British Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, said a 180-hour or 200-hour on-the-job training was not enough to get the kind of competitive edge needed today.

"That just doesn't work. That's why we're talking with universities to make this (internship) longer," he said.

Focus, however, should not just be on getting college degrees, Schumacher said.

"The focus now is on colleges and universities, but not every Filipino can go to college. A good high school graduate trained vocationally for one or two years can of good value also," he said. "We would like to see more intense discussions with high schools, but those types (that) there are also not be careers and that you don't necessarily have to go to college."

The EDGE Academy, ECCP and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines are holding a job fair on April 22-23 to match the unemployed and even those currently employed but who are not satisfied with companies that have openings.

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CHATEAU MARGAUX vineyard south of France. (At left) Dix Lorenzo visits to Manila are (second) Chateau Margaux director general Paul Pontallier, Chateau Margaux business development director Aurélien Valance, (standing) Fleishmann-Hillard CEO Philippe Capdevielle and Pacific director, head of Asia Pacific Christophe Bouvier.

Where to find best sizzling 'bangus'—and more—in Dagupan

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aquino

JAM SWEET JAM RESTAURANT

More and more are going into wine investment

On a rare visit, Château Margaux officials grace a very private dinner of titans and talk of a growing passion in Asia

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

KARYLLE

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Where to find best . . .

From page C1

Soup, but the spiciness was tempered down and, aside from pieces, it had thin strips of salmon belly that added a better flavor to the soup.

My favorites are Binagoongang Baboy and Inihaw na Liempo Guisado. If I want a lean meal, I usually order Jun Chicken, an original and, up to now, unparalleled dish. Lastly, I never end a Jun Sweet date without ordering pinaltok. It's just the way pinaltok should be... organic, like not overcooked and soggy and fresh ingredients always used.

To end the meal, may I suggest the camote puffs. Being home-made, too, as we pass through the pastry shop on the ground floor. The lumpia and lobsiguin are also worth trying. Everything is good in Jun Sweet Jun, that's why it's on the top of my list.

DAGUPAN Vice Mayor Belen Fernandez

Sonata Grill

On the boundary of Binmaley and Dagupan, set amid fish ponds are several restaurants specializing in grilled seafood. One of my favorites is Sonata. I always order grilled. Also with clams soup. Called bulad locally, the bittersweet soup of clams paves the way for fresh specialties like bibe and tadiguit. One should always order a plateful of sweetsour dipped in vinegar, or what the Ilocanos call *dara*, with their grilled seafood.

PATUTINA'S

Cafe Du Marc

Located right at the heart of Dagupan is Café Du Marc. The owners have "settled" down in this cozy wood and wrought-iron nook after operating one of the most successful catering outfits in Dagupan. Du Marc is the perfect romantic evening hide (tuck rifle in the whole of Binmaley, and just thinking about it makes my tummy-music already. Not to be missed is Lengua Adlawa, named after the Cebuano **mainumis** rule: **named is all. Along Jolley** Quintero. Finally, when doesn't want pasma (sorry to stay here Aero)? Now a spot of this delicious staple made only with pinnekbet secretly and fresh vegetables, brought down daily from nearby Baguio.

Matalino's

Over at Bonuan in the northern part of Dagupan is Matalino's. When wanted as a sidedish turo-turo on the roadside catering to hungkyers to nearby Tondaligan beach has grown into one full-sized restaurant located side-by-side. There's also a branch in Urdaneta City.

If you're looking for the best sinigang na bangus belly, Matalino's has it. After a heavy meal, try the *pinghirno pes...pandilao de oxes* made by relatives of nearby Lasip Grande, a barangay in Dagupan.

The Dagupeno

The Castro family, owners of the restaurant, trace their roots to Dagupan. Although they have moved their operations to Calasiao, they have kept the name that has made Cafe Dagupeno. For non-cholesterol-conscious folks, the Dagupeno Crispy Pata is a must. The resto also serves variations of sizzling bangus belly—tortyalti, barbecue, a la pobre or simply grilled.

There are countless other places I plan to in Pangasinan and here in Dagupan. One need not have a lot of cash to indulge. Oftentimes, I sit at Pipin Pipin Alley in Calasiao Street and order a plateful of pigar pigar (thinly sliced fresh beef sautéed with cabbage) for a bunch of what I pay in the restaurants. When I find adventurous, I go to Binmaley Cheese Store and scrap up a bowl of Bankahenan—basically a

From page C1

In the Philippines alone, claimed a regional banker, wine investment could rise to an estimated level of millions of pesos a year, due to Filipino or another rich country in Asia could be triple that.

Pontvillet said in the past two years, the Asian wine market has been fast approaching the level of Europe and the US. His group regularly escorts rich Chinese to be in touch with the markets of, say, Korea and Singapore.

Passion, obsession

Why an investment fund is investing in wine?

Passion. Obsession. There are people to whom fine wine is a passion that surpasses all else (passion for with included!), so much so that their lifestyle revolves around it. And what fuels the fusion of passion in this case is the fact that mastery of wine is a lifetime work. It's an elusive craft, where the pursuit of knowledge is a never-ending process of a finish line you never do reach.

Pontvillet notes a recent discovery: "What has changed in 10 years is that our market isn't limited to the traditional investor. In more and more places, people are into fine collection [likewise, fine wine]—in the Philippines, Thailand, Eastern Europe."

Lens of fine wine to like a John Updike novel—it's an acquired taste. It needs your full concentration, if not commitment, unlike, say, a John Grisham.

Château Margaux is a wine that has seen much controversial, since its time: cable-connoisseur demographics. To its devotees, it is a love thing, as its literature says, "that draws both the greatness and uncertainty of human destinies...heritage left by a succession of families as well as the genius of nature."

In fact in Bordeaux, the south of France, dating back to the 16th century, covers more than 300 ha, but only 80 is wine acreage—a strict selection is based on excellence and...

Château Margaux is covered precisely because of this strict selection....a limited yield born out of the unique combination of terroir and natural conditions, and thereafter added, "weather and soil and technical decisions."

It is what Pontvillet and many others of like mind call "the gifted soil"—an asset or factor in winemaking which some countries have managed to turn into an issue or point of debate now, less that is another story.

Defining difference

But for a heritage like Château Margaux, terroir is the defining difference. "At the end of the 17th century," its brochure stated, "it became part of the famous elite 'First Growths'...Since then, Château Margaux has known fame and fortune, gaining its experience in the upheavals of both art...in wars and crises alike

weathered the effects of the centuries and their storms. But terroir always remains the treasure that makes possible every existence.

"Terroir is in wine value/heredity is to man, i.e. both everything and nothing," it continues. "Everything, because without it, nothing is possible. But, nothing, because it is only revealed through the experience of man's work."

The primary factors that make up the "terroir of a grand cru" are soil and climate. The climate allows the "grapes to reach perfect, harmonious maturity."

There are good years, and not so good years. The 15th century, for instance, Pontvillet cited, was troublesome wars, and the 16th century a very cold era.

The soil could give that unique, infinitesimal difference, so that "very small variations, even between neighboring vineyard rows, can translate into enormous differences in the wine."

Grape varieties are grapes, chosen and aged—that's where the human factor comes in, the technical decisions Pontvillet spoke of..."lots of care and hard work that could make a good wine a better wine."

It is claimed that (though the decision of the Château Margaux 1953, 1961, 1982 and others are only appeal to the palate but also, as to literature says, "stir our emotions, a feeling not linked to any particular nation and emotions...but from the subtle harmony of the whole."

Their time does in part.

Pontvillet offered an interesting way of describing the creation of fine wine: "Wine is like people, your children. You raise them in the same environment, but some are gifted, others not so. Sometimes you adapt to the genetic potential."

But, he adds, "great wines are a combination of happiness." Exactly what claims and in the face of today's stock market. PM

More and more are going into wine investment

Parokya ni Edgar: Making Jolly Good Music Together

American grills, European meats, Australian pies

NO-NONSENSE FOOD—THAT means no frills, like traditional dishes with the slightest of twists. We traversed Alabang, Makati and Greenhills to sample basic grills and salads, each one rated in a different way, each with its own pluses and minuses.

Burgoo (pronounced burgoo), 2/L, Peninsula, Greenhills. You can avoid the long walk if you do not go through the main entrance but use the one on the left side. The type of food served is a mix of grills done in the pure (special) 17th-century Kentucky, USA) included appetizers and game.

Dining area—Nothing special in the décor and table arrangements.

Staff—Inventive and unfortunate.

Service—Quick and efficient.

In the evening—Different menu in two more. There's a wide selection from pasta to chicken and chops and seafood. One can start with Ala. Be

Spring Rolls made of bean sprouts (sayt), cilantro, chicken strips and Shanxi Jack Cheese, laced with sesame oil and wrapped and fried crispy (P275) and P395). Or get the Seafood Caesar Salad, generously topped with fried calamari, grilled shrimps and crab meat garnished with Parmesan cheese with special dressing and garlic croutons

RATING INDEX

Poor

Good

Excellent

THE QUIET DINER

RESTOS AT A GLANCE

(some price). Chicken Combo Fajitas are chicken strips with veggies and freshly made tacos. The chocolate dessert given to a visitor from Guatemala is optional. For birthday celebrants, there is the Seafood Linguini, light and tasty. Another dish is the Burgoo Kebabs with bell peppers.

Average dining-meal cost is about P500. Service charge and government taxes are charged. Ice cream was discounted.

Rating

Mickey's Delicatessen Steakfine Grill—341 Jupiter cor. Orbit Streets, Bel-Air 2 Village, Makati; call 8906930. Dubbed "the best of Bacolod for steak lovers," this restaurant's main attractions are its steaks and sausages.

Dining area—Very European, of heavy dark wood. Always crowded at mealtimes.

Staff—Efficient, neat.

Service—Quick and generous.

In the menu—The sausages are homemade; the most popular are Nuremberger pork sausages, which can be taken from the deli and cooked quickly. Several such Sauerkraut, which is just right in its mild sourness. From the grills, any of the following would satisfy special cravings: roasted steaks, Bavarian Meat Loaf, Grilled Pork Belly, Crispy Pork Knuckles, pasta and pizzas. Beer and wines are served to complement the meal.

Tab is reasonable. Usual service and government charges are included in the bill.

Rating

Sydney's Aussie Café and Resto—BCDemp centers, Villamor Corporate City; call 8936868. This newly opened restaurant gives a so-called "Taste of Australia." Signage is not visible from the outside, but this is right beside Noah's Supermarket, Metrobreeze (Alabang).

Dining Area—Home in colors.

Staff—The girls are charming, the males uneven.

Service—Average.

In the menu—Australian Lamb Racks (P490) are on thinly sliced one could not see anything Australian (big mention) in it. The Roast Fish and Chips (P235) was rather tough and dry if you settle for the typical Chicken Pie (P190), you might have to look hard for the chicken; but it is tasty on the whole. Goondooroo Chicken, the chef's reportedly much-reserving ribs, Caesar Salad with Chicken, Roast Beef Sandwich, Aussie Burger and Seafood Lovers' Pizza. Executive Meals are at P299 per head. All these include Soup of the Day, a starter like Bruschetta, Garlic Chicken Sandwich and Coffee with Cookie. There's also one with a choice of Chicken, Grilled Pork or Fish.

Usual service charge and taxes are included. Seniors are given the legal discount.

Rating

Make your own Thai salad

The Thai New Year is being celebrated with a fitting food festival

By Norma Chikiamco
Contributor

AFTER THE CELEBRATION OF THE Chinese New Year last February comes next the celebration of the Thai New Year, Called Songkran, it means "to move, on" and marks the beginning of the solar year for the Thais, who observe a slightly different calendar for about six days the year 2009. In 2002, three they count the years from the time of Buddha). Last Monday the Bank Thani Hotel hosted the celebration of Songkarn in partnership with Thai Airways, the Tourism Authority of Thailand and the Royal Thai Embassy.

A traditional ritual during Songkarn is the splashing of water to wash away bad luck in the following weeks marked as ladies in colorful attire poured fragrant water over the hands of Thai ambassador Ballanut Singhara Na Ayudhya and Bank CEO Patrick Bunnin. The ritual is always many of passing respect to the elders in society and asking for their blessings. Traditional dances from the Mekhala-Hip Thai dancers, a fruit carving demonstration by Khun Lamng Hoon and music from Blaze Trio completed the presentation.

Guest chef for the festivities is Chaleng Sukkapornphol, executive chef of Dusit D2 Hotel in Chiang Mai. Together with Benjarong Restaurant's chef Phachongporn Rotsuk, he's whipping up authentic Thai dishes for the lunch and dinner buffet that will be available at Benjarong until April 19 (for reservations, call 8673333 ext. 8886).

One of the dishes we enjoyed during the festivities was prawn salad, a refreshing blend of prawns, shrimps, strips of chicken and peanuts tossed with a tangy dressing. Here's a conversion of the dish, based on the recipe given by Dusit's chefs.

Thai Ponelo Salad

For the dressing:
- ½ cup lime juice
- ¼ cup water
- 2 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 ½ tbsp. sugar (fish sauce)
- ½ red bell pepper, finely sliced

For the salad:
(also good as medium shrimps)
- 1 small chicken breast, cut into strips
- 1 medium size pink grapefruit
- 1 onion, sliced and fried in a little oil
- ½ cup roasted peanuts

Make the dressing:

In a saucepan combine sugar and water. Simmer until sugar dissolves completely and liquid is clear. Combine lemon juice, palm and bell pepper in a bowl and whisk in sugar-water mixture. Let cool.

Make the salad:

Boil or steam shrimps until they turn pinkish. Heat oil in wok and sauté onions. Set aside. Cook chicken breast strips in a nonstick pan until fully cooked. Peel prawns and slice in ½-inch-size segments.

In a salad bowl, combine shrimps, chicken breast, prawns, onions and peanuts. Pour in salad dressing and toss to coat well. Serve chilled.

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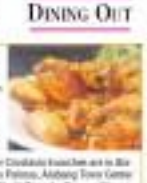
Singapore Airlines' new dishes

DINING OUT

Singapore Airlines is warmly invited to Priority Passenger Service (PPS) members to taste the best from Thailand and Borneo. Elite dishes for the Manila-Singapore flights. The guests-at-large the dish created by Chef Alfred Pardale of Singapore Airlines' International Culinary Partner—a red chicken with coconut sauce, which will be served exclusively in First Class on the Manila-Singapore flights only. Singapore Airlines PPC Club is exclusively for passengers who frequently fly First and Business Class. Call 7800888 loc. 8000.

Asian buffet

Crowne Plaza Group Asian Buffet is available 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and 6-9 p.m. The menu is inclusive of The Lodge, EP. Shangri-La Plaza Mall (8150808). Other Crowne Plaza Inns are in Batangas, EL, Corte de las Palmas, Alabang Town Center (7725858), Tacloban, North Triangle, Quezon City (9078807), and at Rockwell, Powerplant Mall (7256405).



Fish fingers

Marian Quiñez, fashion and lifestyle columnist, finds Fingers at P475, Bangus Sisig at P180 and Malay Binit Pilen at P200. Enjoy these new treats while you have lunch or dinner at Tesoros, Trinoma corner Panay Ave., Metro Manila, Manila Pavilion Mall Mall of Asia and Robinsons Galleria.

'Sorsan' in choco foodsa

Mayi Sorsan Fonseca and Chef Rosabel Ong's other wonderful creations are featured at Greenbelt 5's Restaurant's "Taste of the Century Filipino Cuisine" at the DF. Rainforest Mall Veranda, Ayala Center, Makati. Bahaya nalang ako chocolates is a feast to spread. Call 7000048 or 7108888.

The Heat of Recession Can Still Cook Up a Feast

Singapore Airlines' new dishes

Passenger C1

Seafood buffet

Solid seaspray at InterContinental Manila-seaspray-sold April walk-a-lap-gan buffet selection. Until April 30, the hotel's Filipino chefs are whipping up popular fish and seafood dishes based on recipes culled from the country's various provinces. Indoctrinate Fabulously Fresh Grilled Squid with Minced Beef (Sisig-style), Broiled Isa Pampano (Fried Bataan Lapwrapped Pampano Fish), Relleng Isda (Lemongo (Bandara Grata or Bass and Dorgen), Gisantes nga Tilapia (Fried Marinated St. Peter's Fish with Mango-Ginger Sauce), Sinigang na Kandala sa Miso (Catfish in Miso Sour Soup, a popular dish in Binalyanan, Bula), Tinowo Bangkal (Grilled Milkfish stuffed with onions, tomatoes, garlic, calamansi, salt and pepper), Main-ninan Ni'lalom Pakete na Salmonggong (Mackerel Roast) or Sibo (Barbecue). Steamed Tanigique (Mackerel) with Lobi, Ginat-an Yellow Fin Tuna or Sl. Peter's Fish in Coconut Milk with Malunggay (Moringa) or Pechay (Chinese Cabbage), Tortang Dulong (Fried Pygmy Goby Cake). Lapu-lapu Escabeche, Bilasa-ng Cuapu-kapu or Tuna Belly Steak and Guisadong Gingkamas at Hipon (Stir-fried with Shredded Turnips). Lunch buffet dining is available Monday to Sunday, and for dinner, Monday to Saturday. Call 7837000.

Angus beef burger

Kenny's Roast and Grill offers Angus Beef Burger, half a pound of grilled Angus beef, as well as Roast Chicken, Smoked Salmon and Cream Cheese, Philly Cheese Steak made with tender beef strips and caramelized onions under a layer of melted American cheese. All-American Feeling, protein-rich Tuna Melt, Grilled Four Cheese made with mozzarella, sharp cheddar, parmesan and Monterey Jack cheeses, and Grilled Herb and Cheese. Lighter plates include Grilled Tomato Pesto and Mozzarella and Roasted Vegetables. Call 896 9600 or 8963888.

Super solo meals

Starting today, Super Bowl of China will start serving bowls of rice toppings for only P88 via the new Super Solo Meals. Beef, pork, chicken and fish dishes come with jasmine rice. The dishes include Super Solo Beef with Broccoli, Super Solo BBQ Pork Asado, Super Solo Roast Chicken Adobo and Super Solo Fish Fillet with Tausi Sauce. Just add P35 for upgrade plain rice to garlic fried rice. This special promo is good for dine-in, take-out and delivery orders. Call Super Delivery Hotline, 731 5888.

Japanese pork tenderloin

Visit Diamond Hotel's Yurakuen Japanese Restaurant for Kaiseki Festival. It features deep-fried dishes such as Japanese pork tenderloin, pork tonkatsu, fried oyster and fried panko prawns. Kiddie Bento Box consists of fried shrimp and squid rings, gindara teriyaki, caramelized egg, chicken ball skewers, pork in sweet soy sauce, California maki, beef spaghetti and cooked seafood fried rice. Yurakuen's Kaiseki Festival and Kiddie Bento are available until April 30. Call 5518000 or 5250000.

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Elbert's Cheesesteak Sandwiches at the Concourse, and Lulubelle and Cibo Bimbi at R3 are now open. Every new space is a new taste.

POWER PLANT MALL

Editor Emerita D. Velarde

ENTERTAINMENT

Gibson's wife files for divorce

LOS ANGELES—MEL GIBSON'S WIFE OF 28 years filed for divorce Monday, citing irreconcilable differences. Robert Gibson filed the petition in Los Angeles Superior Court. The couple have seven children, but only one under 18. Robyn has requested joint custody of their 10-year-old son. AP

DID YOU KNOW...

Maybe she came here in disguise

IN HER NEW MOVIE, "SALT," CURRENTLY shooting in New York City, Angelina Jolie is a CIA agent who must slip into a number of disguises [see photos at left] to elude capture.

If she has that learned enough tricks, did the actress manage to turn up incognito when she and real-life partner Brad Pitt reportedly made a quick trip to the Philippines to adopt the seven-mth baby to their "rainbow brood"?

A story about the power couple's secret visit here, reported by the British tabloid Daily Mail in its website, remains unverified.

The Inquirer's Los Angeles correspondent, Rebecca Sequeles, sent e-mails and made phone calls to the couple's managers and agents, who all declined to comment on the story. Sequeles also contacted a publicist at Columbia Pictures to confirm a portion of the Daily Mail story that mentioned the actress taking a break from filming "Salt" to meet the adoption processors there. The studio publicist told Sequeles, "Production... [has] been extremely quiet about shooting any movement by Angelina now."

But should a dossier be sought to track up the wild rumor, Sequeles was not beyond joining that Quentin Tarantino would be in the picture. The maverick director, who just finished working with Pitt on a new film, "Inglorious Bastards," is an avowed fan of Pinoy movies circa 1960s and '70s, and was a guest of honor at the 2007 Cinemanila film festival (and famously took a pedicab to Malacañang, remember?).

New TV show, the second or third time around

BARE FOR NOTHING WHEN NEW shows are introduced on local TV, they put their best culture feet forward, pull out all the stops, splurge on budgets, production values and regular and guest stars, and generally come on like a house on fire. After their showy opening salvos, however, some new productions quickly run's fury, slow and shallow. Talk about taking viewers' interests for granted.

In the light of this desultory tendency we used to view and review, not just the initial telecasts of new TV shows, but also some of their subsequent episodes. Only after we watch a number of telecasts are we more correctly evaluate how these programs are really shaping up. And so, to re-view:

Nestor U. Torre

'Chasers Are'

We found the second telecast of "Chasers Are" on QTV less dramatic than its initial episode, but it was ultimately more thought-provoking, because it focused on the broader topic of spiritual healing, specifically on the healing priest, Fr. Joey Bilbo.

As with the show's first telecast, however, we found the long focus on just one topic to often offer a subtle, and we would like to repeat our suggestion that the otherwise exceedingly viewable show line up two fascinapes week.

'Frankshow'

The debuting program "Frankshow" on ABC got a lukewarm review from newsreader Ang. Since then, we've watched the show again on occasion, and found that our suppose were still held.

Ironically, the show isn't an involving viewing experience, because quite a number of the student debaters it features mimic spooky delivery and loquaciousness for excitement and pronouncement. How wrong headed can you get?

'Eyong Dalawa'

On the chasers, "Eyong Dalawa," our initial review featured on the new-the-top pop-mods turned in by its young leads, especially Jake Cuenca. What do you know? After a few weeks, we caught a TV show that appointed Cuenca his outstanding performance in the show. Was this his handled way of offsetting our negative notes on his portrayal?

To say sure, it prompted us to watch the show again, to see if Cuenca's work on the show had measurably improved.

Can April 1, the show featured a very melodramatic confrontation scene involving Cuenca's character John (his) scene back from the "dead"), his half-brother played by Gerald Anderson, and Kim Chiu as the girl they both loved.

After Cuenca's character's alleged "death," Gerald and Kim's characters had become sweethearts—now that he had resurfaced, therefore, they had a huge problem to contend with!

To his credit, Cuenca handled his part in the scene with relative circumspection. However, in a subsequent sequence that required him to react to a hallucination, he went still and hysterical once more.

Of course, Cuenca's handlers may point

NEWS 30

THE BEER BELLY REDUCER

Fast And Easy Inch-Loss For Men

For men who want to lose that bulging and unsightly belly quickly and easily, now there is a solution! Plastic surgeons have invented a machine that can "melt away" stubborn tummy fat in a patient's lunchbreak – **ULTRASHAPE**. This treatment gets rid of unwanted bulges and unsightly fat deposits, does not require surgery. It's very effective in removing excess stomach fat, love handles or fat in other areas.

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In 2006, Ultrashape was founded in USA by Ami Glickman M.D., formerly a senior plastic surgeon and Yoram Eshel, PhD, MBA, a leading expert in high-power ultrasound technology. When they developed Ultrashape, it was well known that ultrasound waves were able to break down and destroy fat cells, releasing the fat contained within them. Glickman and Eshel built on that to come up with the unique concept of Ultrashape.

Ultrashape is the first and only non-surgical fat-destroying treatment. It promises a reduction of up to 2 cm. in a single session. It is such a hassle-free procedure. You walk in, get the treatment and go straight to your next appointment. It's as easy as that. Absolutely no anesthesia, no pain and no recovery is needed. Patients can resume their normal activities right after a treatment. It does not have the risks of liposuction and can be used to effectively deal with problem areas of fat.

Ultrashape promises an average loss of about 2 cm. in a single treatment.

Normally about 4 or 5 sessions are recommended to fully achieve the result required. Both men and women who have tried it were impressed by the immediate results after just a single session. Proven effective, Ultrashape is definitely a breakthrough in fat reduction.

Ultrashape is now available at **Marie France FOR MEN**. Call 813-7858 for your free consultation. All consultations and treatments are strictly conducted in private.

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GALLERIA

1 FAST and FURIOUS 4
2 SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE
3 DRAGONBALL EVOLUTION
4 FRIDAY the 13TH
5 T2
6 KNOWING
7 THEY WAIT
8 QUEEN RAQUELA
9 MONSTERS vs. ALIENS
10 NEW IN TOWN

ERMITA

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METRO EAST

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NOVALICHES

1 FAST & FURIOUS 4
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3 FRIDAY the 13TH
4 T2

PIONEER

1 SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE
2 DRAGONBALL EVOLUTION
3 T2
4 FRIDAY the 13TH

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2 T2
3 STREETFIGHTER
4 12 ROUNDS

DASMARINAS

1 T2
2 FAST & FURIOUS 4
3 DRAGONBALL EVOLUTION
4 FRIDAY the 13TH

IMUS

1 FRIDAY the 13TH
2 DRAGONBALL EVOLUTION
3 FAST & FURIOUS 4
4 T2
5 SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE

ANGELES

1 FAST & FURIOUS 4
2 T2
3 FRIDAY the 13TH
4 DRAGONBALL EVOLUTION

STARMILLS

1 KNOWING
2 T2
3 FRIDAY the 13TH
4 DRAGONBALL EVOLUTION
5 FAST & FURIOUS 4
6 THEY WAIT

BACOLOD

1 FRIDAY the 13TH
2 T2
3 DRAGONBALL EVOLUTION
4 THE UNBORN
5 KNOWING
6 THE SECRET OF MOONACRE

ILOILO

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2 T2
3 FRIDAY the 13TH
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MOVIEWORLD

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New TV show…

Frontpage Ol

But he was simply reacting to the terrifying hallucinations, in his bedroom was called for. We submit, however, that it was still an instance of excessive emotionalizing for emotionalizing's sake.

More experienced and insightful actors have a keener sense of the thin line between drama and melodramas, and work hard not to cross it, because they realize that, as good acting, convictions are not to be outdone in, but to be purposively used to clarify a dramatic or thematic point.

Less is indeed more, because in interpretation allows the thematic point to emerge, and not get swamped and upstaged by all that can overwhelming.

It turned out that, aside from Ocasco, Kiko Cibo also had a problem in the episode. Instances she could not sufficiently shift her character's terrible mood and emotional predicament. She now loved Sushi, but couldn't let that hurt the already battered fiancee.

Instead of digging deep into her intuitive instinct character's thoughts and feelings, Cibo opted to play it safe and go the "indicating" high melodramatic route, and that ended up as another liability in the admittedly difficult episode. Andrewes didn't do great work either, but more off with the least deficient or the most tug portrayal.

'Dragonball Evolution'

Leading Asian international actor Chow Yun Fat plays the key role of the wise Master Roshi in "Dragonball Evolution," a film based on the Japanese manga. Many fluids guides his young protégé, Goku, a humanoid living on earth who, at age 16, discovers that he has a daunting destiny: To save the planet from alien invasion.

To be able to do so, he goes on a quest to collect seven mystical dragon balls. Justin Chatwin plays the film's young hero, and James Wong directs.

Insightful actors have a keener sense of the very thin line between drama and melodrama

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

FRIDAY THE 13TH / PG-13 7:00, 10:00

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2) DRAGON BALL PG-13 12:40, 3:40, 6:50, 9:50, 10:20

3) T2 PG-13 12:10, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30

4) SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE PG-13 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40

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ZAC EFRON

17 AGAIN

WELCOME TO CRYSTAL LAKE

FRIDAY THE 13TH

R-18

NOW SHOWING

Wanted: Wedding singer

RYAN AGONCILLO REALIZED that Fox TV's show "Tuluyanang Pinoy" has attracted a loyal audience when strangers mauled stopping him on the streets, asking if they could autograph.

"From the waiter to the peanuts gallery," Ryan told Bandera/ Inquirer/San Diego 6.

The show has gathered a motley cross including a bomb, Eric, a man who pulls out stunts with his teeth, snake wrangler and ventriloquist.

While Ryan was out cueing in Clark, Pampanga, an Arki kid stood in his way and forbid/Hallyween.

Talent scouting is part of the job as host—quite a switch from his first gig on ABC-TV's "Tulfington Hick."

Irony aside, Ryan explained, the show is guaranteed to discover talents that are either zero/amazing or unamazing.

Among the most shocking for his was a Hindu cutie. "While I was interviewing him, I could smell and see blood," Ryan recalled. "Maybe he got nervous, but he wound/ seriously hurt."

Such unexpected moments make the show a roller coaster ride for audiences and show regulars aside from Ryan Andre Gomez, Classic DJ, John Lapus, Eugene Domingo and Jane Oineza.

MILEY Cyrus performs on ABC's "Good Morning America" in New York April 8. AFP

SARAH Geronimo sings another one.

Jones, among others, who are also called "Talent Scouts."

"I thought they would be jaded," Ryan said. "After all, they've been in the business for so long. Still, they are truly entertained. Any voice called is formidable. 'Can Dion see his ass/ watching party?'"

Indeed, many Tuluyanang Jans have opened by booking agents and dinkbert companies through the program.

But Ryan found a singer for his forthcoming wedding to Judy Ann Santos? Me laughed and said Ang/Bubersoft has singled out a (unidentified) offline dominion.

Judy Ann is a Talent Scout for Ryan's birthday special, to be aired April 16 for/ toward 30 on April 20.)

Will the matchmaker be at their wedding? Abangan.

Sarah swims

Sarah Geronimo has bagged another endorsement deal, the latest for Sun Miguel Beverages Inc's distributor of Magnolia healthy beverages. Hired as the face of the company's "Gatas Mag-Refresh ng Magnolia" campaign, Kalbo, the teen spokesperson for SMBI's "Mag-Bagong Malusy Ka!" which encouraged kids to be healthier through proper diet, hydration and play. Gatas from Sarah's "Juice"? She means on weekends to take care of her lungs, definitely has powers source.

Miley Tweeted

LOS ANGELES—Is Disney smoothie Miley Cyrus, 16, growing up too fast?

True, there was the Vanity Fair cover shot last June in which Cyrus was draped only in a bed sheet. Parents complained that it was inappropriate for the star their daughters idolized.

Then there were pictures of her on the Internet showing a strip of her green bra. More recently a snapshot of her sucking "duct cum" prompted an Asian group to say it was "smoking and drinking."

She feels the media are trying to turn her into Hollywood's latest "bad" girl. "I almost feel like people think of me as Sarah," said Cyrus. "I'm smarter than you think. I understand what you're trying to do. It's all a/ crazed game."

Reuters

Trucking exec

NEW YORK—Nancy Shevell became five hundredth of owners in London's Leyenne Square, a green silk jacket on one arm and Paul McCartney on the other. The 49-year-old trucking heiress dazzled on the red carpet as a movie premiere with the ex-Beatle, her first friend of 16 months.

Two days later, Shevell turned away from cameras recording a Metropolitan Transportation Authority meeting where she said a vote to raise city subway fares by 25 percent.

Her other best were Shevell (photographer) to found Amigos and at the Grammys in early 2011 Cyrus's knees of her other life as an executive at a New Jersey trucking company and Daniel member of the largest mom transit agency in the United States. But her public and behind-the-scenes personas have collided more and more since the couples began seeing Mccartney in Long Island's Hamptons area in late 2007.

AP

JUDY Ann Santos, John Lapus and Ryan Agoncillo

PAUL McCartney and Nancy Shevell

The Filipino Rizal Philharmonic Orchestra and Classic Ballet dating the world premiere of "Star Wars: A Musical Journey" at the O2 Arena in London, on April 30.

Tap of the talk shows

For those who missed last weekend's gathering on TV. (And why we are excused, if we are excused.)

◆ Manny Calimon, our reporte Fatima Holds-all-aces-under-his-hats:

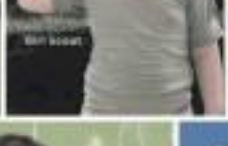
"Why not? Bigbanyan ayaw nag-Starbucks, naging ahas ko sa Eastlee. (Ano/ano wants to look like Eminem?)

◆ Jhoi Cuenco, on the possibility of reconciling with Parliament Dancer:

"We have [separate] love now. Saving nakikita ko siya, nakagang nakikita kong masaya sya." (Ah/yes siya?)

◆ R. B. de las Alas, asked where the happiness is coming from:

"Siguro sa katotohanan and ang nag-iisip ako ng sobrang/ dirong ako ako nag. Di, ang ganda naman ng buhay namin."



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Gang of 5 fast-food friends run fun town

By Oliver M. Palomar G.
Contributor

"JOLLITOWN" IS EDUCATIONAL AND is fun (might make you hungry).

In Jollitown, the characters wear magically-inked mini-tattoos (to scientific minds: More in the show's previous season. To gather clues, bring closer to and share ink

"JOLLITOWN" is a weekly 30-minute educational program.

ace with visiting kids via catchy song numbers and exhilarating adventures. Not of course the show's stars—Jollibee and his gang—each representing an item from the popular fast-food chain's menu.

Tagalog and English are naturally spoken by the animation characters, now-mainstream stars identifiable figures.

Hope the athletic, Twitha the perfectionist, Hotsy the cheerleader, Pam the tech-savvy guy, Jollibee and still Jollibee, an iconic and friendly presence that did not go through any visual or personality makeover.

The weekly 30-minute program, now in its second season, also includes production numbers by several kids.

While the episodes are competently crafted, some story points could always properly translate because of the features' distinct facial expressions, attitudes and computer's hand strikes don't fit, for example, when they're worried about a malicious customer' assails in one episode.

It's good that the show encourages kids to touch books and use their imagination in one-of-its-kind season's episodes. Oddly enough, it had to veer about one girl's habit of reading comic books in the same episode.

CLICK!

Perhaps in a future episode, attention and proper diet will be discussed. It might pose a challenge for the fast-food connected show, but that subject is relevant and worth teaching to young ones (and even some grownups). Regardless, one may harden for more fast-food dining or after seeing the show go try hard to demonstrate the jolly jab from their neighborhoods.

"Jollitown" airs Sundays, 8:30-9:30 a.m., on GMA7.

Deadly bites

"I Bite Bieber" features real-life stories of humans surviving bites from some of the most deadly snakes, insects and other venomous animals.

Each episode also features the fascinating science behind the bites and the aftermath of lethal toxins on the human body.

The show airs Tuesdays at 10 p.m., with replays on Wednesdays at 1 a.m., 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Thursdays at 6 p.m. and Saturdays at 5 p.m.

Kids' Choice Awards

Nickelodeon's 22nd Annual Kids' Choice Awards airs on Nickelodeon Channel tomorrow at 8 p.m. with a replay on April 20 at 10 a.m.

Several, Will Smith, Miranda Cosgrove, Josh Black, Selena Gomez, The Jonas Brothers, Jesse McCartney and Miley Cyrus captured the coveted orange Blimp trophies at the show hosted by Dwayne

'I PAAS Bieber'

Johnson at UCLA's Pauley Pavilion.

Top-notch makeover

The hit series "Top Design" is back with a new season, a new look in high-definition, new producers and a new host.

Celebrated fashion maxed and design aficionado Isaka Hinds hosts the the newest design competition series, which will follow 12 contestants who will compete to create the "top design" to win $100,000 at 9 p.m. on 2nd Avenue.

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At the Malls

GLORIETTA

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Mitch & Erraid at Glorietta 5 Atrium, 5:30pm

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ALABANG TOWN CENTER

Southern Rose-cut Umbrellas (April 18) Sagarinas (May 1)
9:00am, Town Plaza

AYALA CENTER CEBU

Summer Fashion Exhibit
April 18 to 24, Rotunda Area

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Abbi Stockbridge & Ryan Agoncillo with Dear Listen (6pm)
April 18, 10am - 7pm, Central Plaza

TRINOMA

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April 17-19, 10am-10pm & 6pm-9pm
Miniature Library and Level 3

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April 17 and 18 - Glorietta April 20 - Trinoma
5 pm, Town Plaza

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2nd prize: P10,000 + feature in Pulp Magazine
3rd prize: P5,000 + feature in Pulp Magazine
For inquiries, please call CEC Marketing Department at 772-3222

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A still from Santos's "Dry Rain," a Hong Kong filmmaker's tribute to her own Filipino nanny.

DH movie wins in HK festival

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MAY 3, SUNDAY / 8AM

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By Bayani San Diego Jr.

JUST DAYS BEFORE newspaper columnist Chip Tsao incurred the ire of the world's leading psychologist by remarking about Oscar-winning filmmaker Pixar, a short film about a Pinoy domestic helper, DH) won at the 33rd Hong Kong International Film Festival.

Apart from Gina Pareño's Best Supporting Actress role at the Asian Film Awards, "Dry Rain," which features Filipino talent Ana Abad Santos, was the first short film in the festival's 4th Focus Asia competition.

Cannes-bound

Santos told INQUIRER that director Flora Lau, and the cinematographer Hans Gha, A 12-year theater veteran and acting teacher still Repub- ry Philippines, Santos said she donated pro- trainings from DH.

"The script hardly had any dialogue," she recalled. It required a different technique. "I had to be as real as possible. If something had interesting or the mood was recorded in it."

She spent a week with the OFWs. "I talked with them, ate with them. I got to visit some of them at their employers' homes and mostly [interviewed]."

In the helpers' tiny bedrooms, they shared their stories with her.

"They feel their lives are passing them by. They miss their kids' birthdays, graduations ... even deaths in the family. They're afraid that they no longer know who their children are."

A single mom, Santos said that Lau encouraged her to use her son's photo and name in the movie, to make her words more authentic. "It was really painful."

Loving tribute

The camera lenses the short film is the director's loving tribute to her own DH- tplace names "Flora adored her nanny," Santos noted.

"When 'Dry Rain' won at the Hong Kong film fest, Santos remembers. "I felt honored that I was given an opportunity to portray the integrity and intelligence of a Filipino domestic helper."

That's why the Chip Tsao controversy is all the more painful, Santos said. "It source should, I'm being led to believe that it was accident, but unfortunately, he can't undo that evil."

E-mail: bayansandiego@yahoo-mail.com

GARFIELD — By Jim Davis

AL LIPIN — By JOEL ALBERIA

FUSAO BARDY — By RYL JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOVEHONOTE — By ELIZABETH CHOMOCO

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY — By OTHEN PABALINAS

BABY BLUES — By JERRY SCOTT

TULOOK — By HAIRA CO.

BEN — By DANIEL SHELTON

ATOMO AND WEEGY — By VIRA GARCELLANO

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

TODAY'S STAR: People today and tomorrow will not be fooled anymore and will call them, tell this fabulous but hypocritical and wanna. Kris Aquino and the leading actress in laughter, and you in every season of your dreams and the dreams of others. Tom is a real friend and family member. You have love to take advice when it is offered. Yours Rudolf a constant something important this year. **BORN ON** that Kristo Springfield, singer Kansas Kelso dance, basketball player Charlie Hayden, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Others might seek your advice, because you're able to give helpful tips for office work, which might save time and money.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're interested in some point in the future. Speculation, it's a good day to make long-range plans. Related to publishing, higher education, media, medicine and foreign affairs.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Someone older or more experienced might have excellent advice about something having to do with entertainment, arts, economic matters, taxes and debt. Listen to what is offered.

CANCER (June 21 to July 20): Serious, practical discussions with partners and close friends will be productive. You might want to define the division of labor to avoid possible disputes.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Some practical, routine errands today that require concentration, and no distance. You'll be able to do this, you'll be more efficient and in a practical end of the day.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Stick to an excellent day for romance and some ground to discover the who, rather unusual or unique interests. People are in a serious frame of mind today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): An older relative or a parent might help you to solve any possibility. If you are in extreme caution today. At least this person will have advice for you. If not insightful seem.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Your powers of concentration are very strong today. However, you feel more comfortable than usual. Romance-oriented jobs and loans that make you feel like you're pulling your act together.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): If you're challenged by a boss, you will need to stay only practical, somewhat things that will take time a long time. You're not going to show your money or better.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): The stress is to your high today, making a decision that will affect your future. This makes you feel wrong about your ability to take whatever happens.

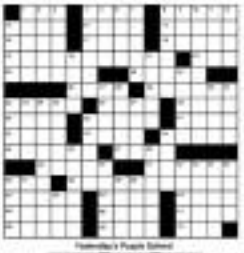
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You will make exciting plans or extend the closest today. You don't want to take responsibility. You have your mind set on what you want to do.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Something other is more expansive and can help you today. Perhaps you will give you advice or direct assistance to something.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS
1. Pastry-it-less: abbr.
5. Endings for radiuses
9. Bring to a
14. Spiritual letter in Isaiah
15. Sullivan bull
16. Unconscionable: slang
17. Fundamental: pref.
18. Cornbelt
19. Unfashionably
20. Ancient Athenian
21. Rose, and seed or flower
23. Hole for hawk
24. Portuguese pasta
25. Shoes at
26. Ocean
28. Lose, reach of the crowd
29. 12th century poet
30. Contemporary score
31. Fast track
32. Ancient Greek
34. Like one Tide
35. Vitamin
36. Ancient Indo-Italic valley
37. Lick
41. Rotten, gel
42. Ancient Italian
44. Mixed company
45. Romanian food
46. Rose
47. Tales, in academia
48. Hand out, as charges
49. Supreme goddess
50. Brewery storage
51. Nuclear do a Klaus's baby
52. Tiles, for
53. Dispatches: slang
54. Dispatches: abbr.
55. Hurt with bitterness
DOWN
1. Rod
2. Provided

3. Jolly or lively
4. Weasel family
5. Weight of sound
6. Ancient Indo-Italic
7. Saint Edmund's or Hudson Estuary
8. Pastor-like: slang
9. Hip-hop combination
10. Sporting union
11. Bizarre
12. Pocket-sized: slang
13. Ancient Indo-Italic
21. Civil liberties organization
22. Administrator
24. Sick medications
27. U.K. laborer
28. Ferried
30. Line
31. Garment accessories
33. Bird cherry
34. Wheat: denominations
35. Concerns
36. Italian colonial
38. Many calendar days
39. Sculptured
40. Jeweled for horse
41. Rock and pebble-sized gravel
43. Rose and bushel
45. Pasta accessories
46. Ark
47. Church neighbor
48. Greek Monday
49. Rainbow
50. Incidental
51. In the manner of
52. Family tree member
53. Hurt with bitterness
54. "Cooperate!"
55. Ringing sound
56. Pocket-sized
Solution: Page 2



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved

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CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — By Dave Green

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	2	9	5	8	7	3	6	1
5	1	7	3	4	6	8	2	9
8	6	3	1	2	9	4	5	7
2	7	1	9	6	4	5	8	3
9	3	4	8	5	2	7	1	6
6	8	5	7	3	1	9	4	2
1	5	2	4	7	3	6	9	8
3	4	8	2	9	6	1	7	5
7	9	6	6	1	5	2	3	4

Stars pause for paws

SINGER-BODYBUILDER LOUIE HERRERA loves cats. "They're the sweetest animals, once you get to know them," he says.

Pardo Diaries is more like a branch manager. Together with several fellow show biz celebs, Louie and Pardo turned up at a recent gathering organized by the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (Paws) at the SM Mall of Asia.

The event, meant to call attention to the plight of stray and abused animals, launched the campaign, "Hamilton, Not Wardrobes."

The stars—among them Nadine Samonte, Hamilton Ruedi, Rita Iringan, Ariel Rivera-tuk, Dominick Shen, Jack Flores Jr., Nyoy Volante and certified Paws volunteer Toni Rose Gayda—cuddled the dogs and cats present.

Most of the animals were from the Paws Animal Rehabilitation Clinic and were up for adoption.

"There are so many homeless cats... just imagine what they go through everyday," said Louie. "We can give them proper homes."

LONG-TIME celebs by Paws volunteer Toni Rose Gayda

YOUNG singer Rita Iringan holds a rehabilitated stray cat.

HITOT Volante with his own pet.

CHEER FACTOR

CAT lover Louie Herrera

Rescuer

Toni Rose herself has rescued several dogs and cats in the past three years and learned them over to Paws.

The "Homeless, Not Wardrobes" campaign is supported by SM Malls and Purina, maker of dog and cat food brands Alpo, Dreamies and Pro Plan.

The launch was led by Paws president Nina Hidalgo-Antonio and program director Anna Cabrera; Merle Philippines president and CEO Manilo Santillanes; and SM Shopping Center Management Corp. president Annie Garcia.

Red plastic jars called "Get a Paws" were turned over to SM supermalls. The public was urged to drop cash donations into the jars, which have been placed in strategic locations at the department store, supermarket, Ace Hardware and Toy Kingdom.

Granted was the Pontus Paws Mobile launch pad via which concerned citizens can donate bigger amounts or adopt pets directly from the animal rehab center. See (0917) 548-2258.

Just one voice

IT'S THE END OF LENT SO I write this, nicely tucked in beside my daughter as she takes her afternoon nap.

As a matter of tradition, my family's Good Fridays, as far back as I can remember, were quiet, quiet at home praying, fasting or abstaining from anything you name it. We would watch the Manny Pacquiao/Oscar De La Hoya "Dream Match" and other known documentaries on television. One unintended consequence of the Shroud of Turin was quite startling. Back in the day, we didn't own a VCR or Betamax machine, and cable TV hadn't yet reached these shores. Plus, the malls, restaurants and movie theaters were closed. There wasn't anything else anyone could do, but reflect on Christ's death and resurrection.

Mine was born a million and one TV channels that offer everything, from counting Tarzan and sports programs to movies and lingerie shows. A live exhibitionists have decided to open their doors to potential customers...after all, there are non-Christians in our metropolis, too. And the streets are filled with everyone rushing to "get many items in all" in the last few days of respite from the hustle and bustle of life.

Funny thing is, it's easier to get away from it all by just staying home. The streets are empty, the atmosphere quieter. It's peaceful, tranquil... the surgery drivebys a rare respite from the craziness of the rest of the year. I welcome Holy Week every year, when I get to spend it in Manila.

Occasional shock

As one who was raised Catholic, I'm horrified to bring things down on something but during Holy Week, particularly on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. It sees in a bit of a shock to the system when, finding myself elsewhere—for example, doing a long-running show in the US or the UK—those holy days aren't considered very holy. I've had my share of Good Friday spent at work. For some reason, although I do understand that this particular Friday ain't any different from all the rest in New York City. I know that it is, and in my heart I've tried to respect it as such.

Now that we're in Manila, it's easier to find the time and quiet, space to reflect upon the Easter miracle. I don't mean only the Resurrection, Christ's conquest of darkness and death, but the gift that it brings us: HOPE. Hope that we all have secured a place with God in heaven... hope that, as individuals, we can overcome the darkness in our own lives and step into the light... hope that, as a nation, we can conquer the darkness of poverty and ignorance, of complacency and distrust, of fear and despair.

BACK STORY

Levi Ledesma

Jesus left us with the greatest commandment: love your neighbor as yourself. Let every day be an opportunity for Easter miracles to be performed, for each of us to act as our brother's keepers and take care of one another. Perhaps in doing this, we will find our light.

Inspiring song

Allow me to share the lyrics of a song that continues to inspire me. May you find some inspiration in these, too.

One Voice

One voice, singing in the darkness
All it takes is one voice
Singing as they lose what's in your mind
And one voice

And when you look around, you'll find there's more than
One voice
Singing in the darkness
Joining with your one voice
Faith and hope every note, another
Voice

Hands are joined and fears subdued
If only one voice would start it on its own
We need just one voice facing the unknown
And then that one voice will never be alone
It takes that one voice
Just one voice
It takes that one voice
And everyone will sing!

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Manila Businesswoman
Natural Forming Advocate
Former Diet & Die
Author of Diet Ain't A Four Letter Word

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SOON TO OPEN: Alabang & Ortigas

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE

Sony Music acts on tour

THE PROMO TOUR "SUMMER MusiCastillano!" features Sony Music artists Keyshmical, Calibido, Gamboa, Sidewinders, Monsieur BK, Lutter Day Story, Room of Monroe and Sweetie starting tomorrow, 8 p.m. at Eastwood Central Plaza, Libis, Quezon City. It moves to SM Pampanga (April 24), SM Sta. Rosa (April 25), SM Dasmari. Bas (April 26), SM Marilao (May 1), SM Bicutan (May 16), SM Clark (May 17) and SM North Edsa (May 30). More dates will be announced.

Lea Salonga's album tour

Lea Salonga's "Only Human" album tour kicks off tomorrow, 7 p.m. at the Music Hall of SM Mall of Asia, and continues on May 16 (SM Davao), May 23 (SM Bacolod), May 29 (Eastwood City).

Carla Orosa at Mandarin

Carla Orosa holds a one-night concert dubbed "Black n Back" tomorrow, 9 p.m. at the Cagnolo's Bar of Mandarin Oriental, Makati. Call 750-8888.

Patti Page at the Big Dome

Patti Page is 81, but the American pop and country star is still active touring, with two Philippine dates set on May 8 at the Araneta Coliseum and May 10 at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu City. Page is rumored for the duet topping "500 Miles," "Tennessee Waltz," "All My Love (Bolero)," "I Went to Your Wedding" and "How Much Is That" (toggle in the Window)," among others. Call 831-3031.

LET'S DO Bay Story

Latin pop at Mark's

Onda Latina, a 10-piece Pinoy band specializing in Latin pop, perform every Wednesday at Mark's Bar Bistro, Greenhill 3, Makati. Call 757-4728.

Tonight

Theater Thursday: Enter Bar Solo at Mag-Net Cafe Entrance

SHOW TIME